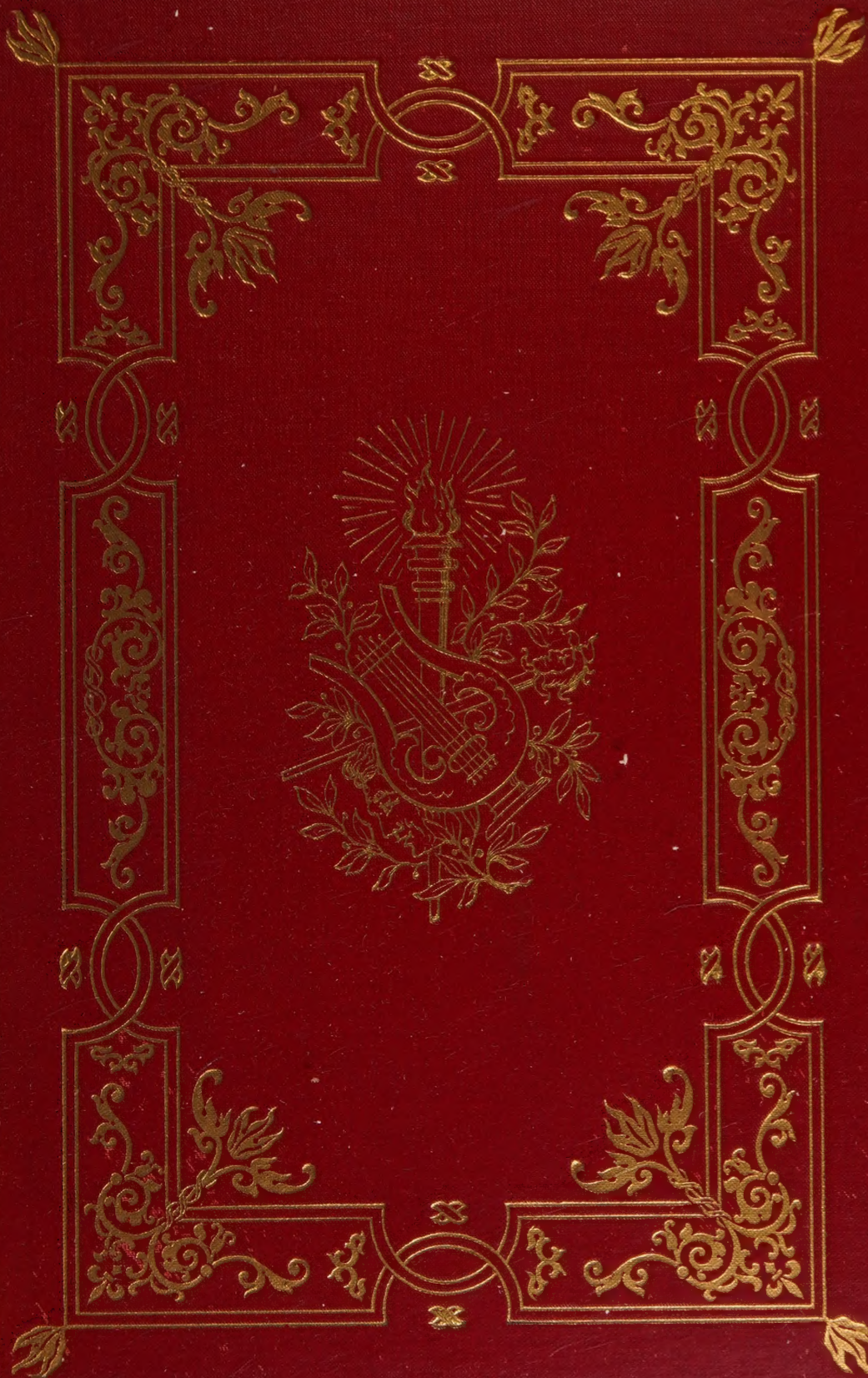




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British Drama

SHAKESPEARE AND CONTEMPORARIES

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. SHAKESPEARE. | 6. MOLIÈRE. |
| 2. BEN. JONSON. | 7. CORNEILLE. |
| 3. FLETCHER. | 8. RACINE. |
| 4. LOPE DE VEGA. | 9. RUIZ DE ALARCON. |
| 5. CALDERON. | 10. MORETO. |

Shakespeare (1) occupies here the place of honor—the middle of the picture—while at his right side stands Ben Jonson (2), who is shaking the friendly, outstretched hand of Fletcher (3), most likely to indicate the relatively same direction of their productions. The Spaniards in the picture are Lope de Vega (4) Calderon (5), Ruiz de Alarcon (9), and Moreto (10), and are balanced by the French dramatists of this classical period of the time of Louis XIV. The figure of Calderon, who is looking for some passage in a book, is a most brilliant composition, as well as the wreathed Moliere (6), next to whom the figure of Corneille (7) appears. The wigged Racine (8) occupies the extreme right of the picture.

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British Drama

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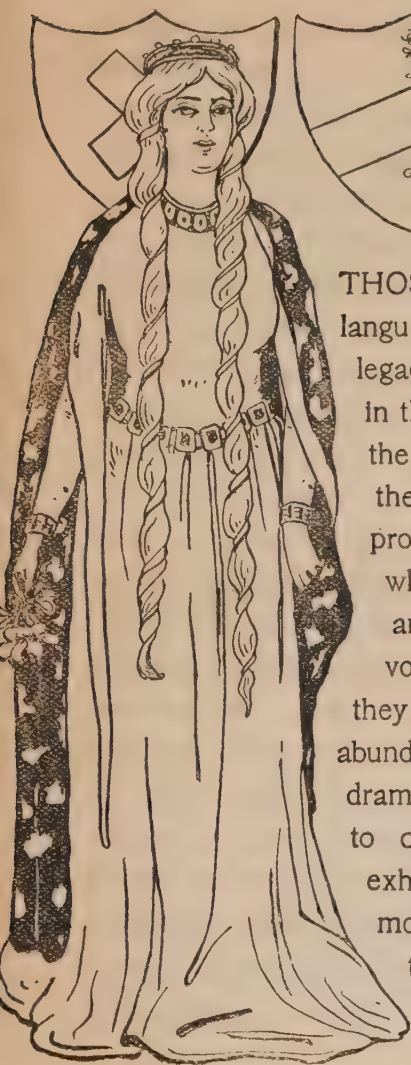
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Prologue



THOSE who speak the English language inherit the grandest legacy of dramatic literature in the world. However wide the variety and however great the literary value of the productions of other races which have been selected and displayed in former volumes of this series, they are far outshone by the abundant riches of the English drama which we come now to consider. The previous exhibition of ancient and modern classics will certainly enhance the beauty and glory of

PROLOGUE

those composed in our own tongue, and should increase our pride and delight in our heritage. Of course, in such a comparison the manifest preponderance is largely due to the cherished masterpieces of the myriad-minded Shakespeare. But even passing by his matchless name, the long roll of British dramatists is not excelled in number or in quality by that of any other people.

The early religious drama was discussed in a former volume. The secular drama began in the middle of the sixteenth century, and flourished in astonishing luxuriance throughout the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth. First came the interludes, which had been mere patches on the morality plays until Heywood raised them to an independent place, similar to modern farces. As an example of true comedy we present the earliest in the English language, *Ralph Roister Doister*, adapted from the Roman Plautus. At the same time, under the influence of Seneca, appeared the earliest English tragedy, *Gorboduc*. But the people turned from these imitations of the ancient classics, with livelier interest, to the chronicle-histories, which exhibited in vivid action the reigns of their own kings. To this department Shakespeare eventually made important contributions.

PROLOGUE

Here we present *Edward II.* by Marlowe, his predecessor, who might possibly have equalled his great successor's achievements had not an untimely fate carried him off.

The first theatre in England was built in 1576. In it were performed the plays of Marlowe, Peele, Lyly, Greene and others. With them Shakespeare was associated, and gradually rose from an humble position to be manager and part-proprietor in the new Globe Theatre, built in 1599. Our readers have without doubt complete and valuable editions of his works, and it has therefore been thought superfluous to offer complete plays; but we give, however, a sufficient account of his career with a full synopsis and careful critical estimate of his various labors. From the overflowing abundance of material afforded by the contemporary dramatists we have selected as a sterling comedy, Massinger's *New Way to Pay Old Debts*. This selection has been made, not only as showing the style of one of the most prolific, scholarly and powerful dramatists of his time, but as indicative of the trend of English comedy toward the introduction of really existing situations, and, therefore, the larger employment of the stage as a corrective school, to which

PROLOGUE

people went, not from a motive of fashion nor to be interested against their will, but as willing to be interested.

In historical and literary value, as well as in artistic display, this volume will, therefore, maintain the degree of excellence which, we are assured by our patrons, has been reached in former issues.

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English Drama.

PART I.

I.

Development of the Secular Play in England.

The transition from the mediæval religious drama to the mystery and morality play has been traced in a preceding volume. The fashion of relieving the sombre tone of these representations by interludes of a frankly secular character was welcomed by the people as well as the players. Historical personages were first introduced, opening the door for a motley company of everyday characters whose actions and speech mirrored those of the local inhabitants. The natural trend of this extension of stage art was more decidedly toward comedy, high and low, but various controlling influences, not hard to trace, kept the tendency to satirical buffoonery in check and encouraged the taste for nobler aspirations.

When the influence of the Renaissance reached England, it lifted the puerile efforts of ecclesiastical playwrights into an atmosphere in which their crudities be-

came eyesores. Glimmerings of the relation of art to nature were gained through acquaintance with foreign models in literary and other work. A higher standard was set and was worthily striven after. In both serious and light dramatic productions the improvement was marked, and here began the grand development which reached its full glory in the Elizabethan drama.

John Heywood's interludes first pointed the way to the broader treatment of life and character in the miracle and mystery plays. Then, the study and imitation of the ancient classical drama were introduced into the English world of letters; and under their influence tragedy and comedy were in their early growths in our literature kept asunder, though not absolutely so. Translation was found the readiest form of expression offering itself to literary scholarship, and Italian examples helped to commend Seneca, the last of the ancient tragedians, as a favorite author for such exercises. With the year of Elizabeth's accession began a series of translations of his plays by Jasper Heywood—John Heywood's son—and others; and to the direct influence of one of Seneca's tragedies is to be ascribed the composition of the first tragedy proper in the English tongue, the *Gorboduc*—afterward renamed *Ferrex and Porrex*—of Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, with whom Thomas Norton was joint author.

The First English Tragedy.

Gorboduc was first performed in London before Queen Elizabeth on January 18th, 1561. Modern criti-

cism pronounces it to be lacking in ease and variety, and overdone with prolix moralizings. This may be admitted, but is it gracious or just to judge Sackville's new departure by modern standards? The following is a brief outline of the play, as given in the Argument: "Gorboduc, king of Britain, divided his realm in his lifetime to his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the deed, rose in rebellion and slew father and mother. The nobility assembled and destroyed the rebels; and afterward, for want of issue of the prince, they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their children were slain, and the land was for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted."

While the construction of the play is based on Seneca's *Thebais*, the subject is taken from British legend, the motive at the beginning being the same in essence as that of *King Lear*. Except for frequent changes of scene, a license borrowed from the Spaniards, the usages of the classic drama are followed. The murders, instead of taking place on the stage, are announced by messengers, as in the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles. The acts are each preceded by a dumb show, in which the contents of that which is to follow are set forth in pantomime. This expedient was long in use on the early English stage, and finds a precedent in the Euripidean prologues. It belongs, however, to the infancy of the modern drama, and is but a poor substitute for lack of dramatic art. The incidents should

appear in the action, instead of being separately narrated, and in *Gorboduc* the heaviness of the movement is further increased by treating the fifth act as an epilogue.

Gorboduc, besides being the first tragedy, was the first English drama published in blank verse. In the following passage is an allusion to the suits of foreign princes for the hand of the virgin queen, referring probably to Eric of Sweden and Philip of Spain:

For right will last and wrong cannot endure;
Right mean I his or hers upon whose name
The people rest, by means of native line,
Or by the virtue of some former law
Already made their title to advance.
Such one, my lords, let be your chosen king,
Such one so born within your native land,
Such one prefer, and in nowise admit
The heavy yoke of foreign government.

King Cambises.

Almost simultaneously with *Gorboduc* appeared *King Cambises*, classed by some authorities among the last of the Morality plays, but belonging rather to the earliest of English tragedies. Of the religious drama they have indeed certain essential elements, since many personified abstractions appear in both, the character of Vice being especially emphasized and vigorously developed. The interest, however, is distinctly historical and real, the leading personages being actual and supposedly historical human beings. The one good deed of Cambises—his condemnation to death of the wicked

judge Sisamnes, who has misgoverned the realm during the monarch's absence—is counterbalanced by so many evil deeds that he falls by a divine Nemesis, as predicted by Vice, who declares him akin to Bishop Bonner. The part which Vice takes in the more serious action is cleverly managed, and there is also much low fun and interchange of ribaldry between him and the three ruffians, Huf, Snuf and Ruf, and the rustics, Hob and Lob. The play was by Thomas Preston, a graduate of Cambridge, to whom Elizabeth granted a pension of twenty pounds a year, an unusual mark of munificence on the part of this close-fisted monarch.

Apus and Virginia, by an unknown author, appeared soon after *Gorboduc*. It is one of the rudest dramatizations of this favorite subject, now almost banished from the stage except in the *Virginus* of Sheridan Knowles. Yet, even this first effort is not without dramatic power. The tragedy—or tragical comedy, as it is styled—opens with a scene revealing the domestic bliss of Virginus, his wife and daughter, which they celebrate in dialogue and song, with the following refrain:

The trustiest treasure in earth as we see
Is man, wife, and children in one to agree;
Then friendly and kindly let measure be mixed
With reason in season, where friendship is fixed.

This happiness continues until the criminal lust of Apus mars the picture. From this point the action progresses simply and regularly. In the epilogue a prayer is offered for the queen; but the oppor-

tunity is missed of which nearly all other dramatists of the time availed themselves—to celebrate the renown of the maiden queen for chastity.

Bale's Chronicle Histories.

In this connection reference may be made to the dramas of Bishop Bale, which belong to an earlier date. Most of them were in the nature of Moral plays, and were specially directed against priestcraft; so that, on the accession of Mary, the author, who had been appointed to the Irish bishopric of Ossory, was compelled to flee to the continent, returning after her death to be appointed by her successor to a prebend's stall in Canterbury cathedral. Of the chronicle histories of Bale the most important is the *Kynge Johan*, which must not be confounded with the *Troublesome Raigne of John*, whence Shakespeare took the materials for his tragedy on the same subject. The bishop's play, published in 1548, was lost for nearly three centuries, being finally discovered, about 1835, among some old papers belonging to the corporation of Ipswich, whence it passed into the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. It breathes a most emphatic defiance of the pope and popery, making war upon the relics of the Roman ritual and of church wealth—such as was spared by Henry VIII. The first act opens with a speech from the king, declaring his lineage and title to the throne and announcing his intention to do his duty. Then enters "Ynglond Vidua"—England personified as a widow—who at once begs for protection from her oppressors.

"Who are these?" asks the king. She replies in these vigorous lines, wishing bad luck to the clericals and their allies:

Such lubbers as hath dysgysed heads in their hoodes,
Whych in ydlenes do lyve by other menns goodes,
Monkes, chanons, and nones in dyvers coloure and shappe,
Both whyght, blacke, and pyed, God send their increase
yll happe.

But conspirators determine that an interdict shall be issued and the reign of popery fully reëstablished. Thus, in spite of the remonstrances of the king, the nobility, clergy and civil order bend the knee before Langton and Pandulp, while Commynalte, the personification of the people, in whom the monarch has placed his last trust, tremblingly submits to the arrogant cardinal. Hearing that enemies from abroad are threatening him from every side, John at last gives way and delivers up his crown. But even this does not satisfy his enemies, and it is finally determined to make away with him by poison. Dissimulation, one of the conspirators, on being promised eternal bliss as the reward, assumes to himself the responsibility of the deed and its consequences. Entering in the guise of a monk, bearing a cup and singing a wassail song, he drinks of the poisoned draught and offers the remainder to the king, who is athirst. Then the monk goes to his death, comforted by the thought that he dies for the church, and the king also expires, but not on the stage, after forgiving his foes and uttering a farewell to England. The tradition that John was poisoned in a monastery,

though long accepted as true, rests on very doubtful authority.

Classical Plays.

In the reign of Elizabeth classical plays were much in favor, including the ten dramas of Seneca translated by Jasper Heywood and others, all being collected into a single volume under the title of *Seneca*. Of *Julius Sesar*, acted before the queen at Whitehall about a month after the performance of *Gorboduc*, nothing is known except the fact of its presentation, although it was probably a reproduction of Grévius' *César*, which appeared in Paris in 1560. Another was *Scipio Africanus*, mentioned by Peele as one of the most popular dramas of the day. Stephen Gosson, himself a dramatist, speaks of *Ptolome* and *Catiline Conspiracies*, "a pig of his own sowe" as "tollerable at sometime." He also refers to *Cæsar and Pompey* and the *Fabii* as the work of contemporary playwrights. Gascoigne's *Jocasta* is a rather free adaptation of the *Phæniissæ* of Euripides, except that the choral odes are chiefly original. It was acted at Gray's Inn in 1566, and was the second English play written in blank verse; for Marlowe had not as yet weaned the people from what he terms

The jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits.

Damon and Pythias.

In connection with the above may be mentioned the *Damon and Pythias* of Richard Edwards, of Christ

Church, Oxford and Lincoln's Inn. It is, however, a tragi-comedy rather than a tragedy proper, and of the kind much esteemed in Italy during the sixteenth century. The play was popular for a time, and its author was lauded by his admirers, one of whom calls him "the flower of our realm and phœnix of our age." It is weak in action, language and metre, and the comic business is in the nature of broad farce.

Adaptations from the Italians.

At this time stories from modern history and romance were also adapted to the stage, especially from Italian novels, the highly-seasoned tales of Boccaccio and other Italian writers stimulating the curiosity and, as Ascham remarks, something worse than the curiosity of Englishmen. France was also introducing the lighter productions of her drama, and these were well received in the English market. The materials for one of Shakespeare's most popular plays was largely taken from Bandello's history of *Romeo and Juliet*, itself preceded by Luigi da Porto's narrative, while both were used before Shakespeare's time for a dramatic version of the story by Arthur Brooke. Yet in none do we find any trace of the genius which the great poet breathed into this popular romance of the middle ages.

Tancred and Gismunda.

Italian novels, and especially those of Cinthio, were a favorite source of materials for Shakespeare, his con-

temporaries and predecessors; but this, it may here be remarked, is no proof that Shakespeare was acquainted with the Italian language. Translations were plentiful, and the first volume of Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* contained sixty of Boccaccio's stories. The tragedy of *Tancred and Gismunda*, taken from the *Decameron*, is the oldest English play extant whose plot is borrowed from the Italian. As in *Gorboduc*, the authors attempted to follow ancient models, every act commencing with a dumb show and ending with a chorus. Originally written in rhyme by five members of the Inner Temple, where it was acted in 1568 before Queen Elizabeth and her "right honorable maidens," it was republished in 1572 by Robert Wilmot, "polished according to the decorum of these days"—that is, put into blank verse.

The theme of the tragedy is romantic in the extreme. Tancred, after surprising his daughter, Gismunda, in company with her lover, causes him to be put to death, and his heart is presented to his daughter in a golden cup. She then fills the cup with poison, drinks from it, and her dying wish to be reunited with her lover in the tomb is carried out by her broken-hearted father, who slays himself with his own hands. An interesting feature of the play is the struggle between the classical taste of the authors and the romantic character of the subject. The first four acts proceed smoothly, Cupid pronouncing the prologue, while choruses of maidens intersperse lyric passages with the action, the real incidents of which are carefully kept behind the scenes. But in the last act the situation becomes too strong to be set

forth in classic style, and Gismunda and her father both die on the stage. The speeches are of inordinate length; but the lyrical portions are graceful, and in other respects the play has literary merit. In the second act, instead of at the end, comes the inevitable compliment to Queen Elizabeth:

Yet let not us maidens condemn our kind,
Because our virtues are not all so rare;
For we may freshly yet recall in mind,
There lives a virgin, one without compare,
Who of all graces hath her heavenly share;
In whose renown, and for whose happy days,
Let us record this Pæan of her praise.

Promos and Cassandra.

In 1578 was printed the *Promos and Cassandra* of George Whetstone, from which Shakespeare took the story of his *Measure for Measure*, both being founded on a novel of Cinthio's, afterward translated into Whetstone's *Heptameron*. In his dedication the author exhibits a very critical spirit, for various reasons condemning the dramatic tastes of European nations, while most severe upon his own: "At this day," he says, "the Italian is so lascivious in his comedies that honest hearers are grieved at his actions. The Frenchman and Spaniard follow the Italian's humor; the German is too holy, for he presents on every common stage what preachers should pronounce in pulpits. The Englishman, in this quality, is most vain, indiscreet and out of order. He first grounds his work on impossibilities; then in three hours runs he through the world, marries,

gets children, makes children men, men to conquer kingdoms, murder monsters, and bringeth Gods from Heaven, and fetcheth devils from hell." His greatest objection to English playwrights is that they do not make the speech of each character appropriate to it, but use one order of speech for all kinds of persons. While taking this lofty ground it cannot be said that Whetstone has practised what he preached. From considerations of decorum, as he states, he condenses his story into two acts, but centres the entire interest in the first one, and to "work kindly" the action of his personages, makes his low comedy very low and his grosser characters very gross. The moral struggles of the heroine are brought to a conclusion too rapidly, and the cumbersome slowness of an offensive plot is only relieved by the intrigues of a courtesan and the ribaldries of a pimp. All these objectionable features are expunged in *Measure for Measure*, albeit one of the weakest of Shakespeare's comedies.

Misfortunes of Arthur.

The *Misfortunes of Arthur*, acted before Elizabeth at Greenwich in 1587, is in some respects one of the most remarkable of early English plays. It is the work of several collaborators belonging to the Society of Gray's Inn, Thomas Hughes writing the body of the drama, Nicholas Trotte the introduction and Francis Flower the choruses of the first and second acts, while three others devised and allegorized the dumb shows with singular ingenuity. Among these three was

"Maister Francis Bacon," already a bencher of Gray's Inn and an ex-member of Parliament. As is shown in his essay on *Masques and Triumphs*, Bacon possessed no little insight into the principles of dramatic effect, and this is one of the claims that have been brought forward for him as the real author of Shakespeare's plays.

The *Misfortunes of Arthur* is taken from the *Morte d' Arthur*, which, says Roger Ascham, "in our forefathers' time" had formed the staple literary entertainment of the English court. But, though the Arthurian legend had furnished the subject of more than one Elizabethan drama, it proved impossible to galvanize into a national subject the unreal figures of this mystic cycle of romance. In the play in question the story of Arthur's fall is viewed as the wreaking of a curse due to the hero's sin, and the ghost of Gorlois, whom in life Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father, had so cruelly wronged, opens the first act as the shade of Tantalus opens the *Thyestes* of Seneca. The expectation of Arthur's return by the guilty Guenerora recalls the opening situation of the *Agamemnon*, and in general the rules of the classic drama are carefully observed. Very spirited is the address of Arthur to his soldiers, in which he bids defiance to his rebel son, and the tragedy ends effectively with the mysterious disappearance of Arthur:

This only now I crave (O fortune erst
My faithful friend) let it be soon forgot,
Nor long in mind, nor mouth, where Arthur fell;
Yea, though I conqueror die, and full of fame,

Yet let my death and parture rest obscure.
No grave I need (O fates) nor burial rights,
Nor stately hearse, nor tomb, with haughty top;
But let my carcase lurk; yea, let my death
Be aye unknown, so that in every coast
I still be feared, and looked for every hour.

Chronicle Histories.

From the double danger which threatened the tragic drama of England in the days of its infancy—that it would congeal on the cold heights of classical themes, or dissolve its vigor in the glowing heat of a passion fiercer than that of the Italians—it was preserved, more than by any other cause, by its happy association with the traditions of the national history. The crude growth of the chronicle history proved strong enough to assert itself by the side of tragedy based on classical and Italian models; and in a series of works of more or less uncertain dates, a vein was opened from which Shakespeare was to draw the richest ore. Among these rude compositions, in which comedy was freely intermixed with tragic elements, are the *Famous Victories of Henry V*, acted before 1588, the *Troublesome Raigne of King John* and the *True Chronicle History of King Leir*. A still further step in advance was taken in what really deserves the title of the *Tragedy of Sir Thomas More*, not so much on account of the relative nearness of the subject to the time of its treatment, as because of the tragic responsibility of character here already worked out.

Written partly in prose and partly in blank verse,

the *Famous Victories* is not even divided into acts and scenes, nor otherwise constructed with the slightest degree of dramatic skill; yet it is not without a certain degree of vigor and freshness, and in many of its situations and characters we recognize the familiar scenes and figures of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. Beginning with the end of Henry IV's reign it introduces not only the wild doings of Prince Hal and his merry companions, but also the interview between the prince and his dying father, and the premature seizure of the crown by the former. Then follow in rapid succession the victorious campaign which ends with Agincourt and the marriage of the young king with the princess Katherine, the scene between her and Henry containing many of the best points in Shakespeare's version, without being disfigured by the grossness observable in the latter.

Origin of Shakespeare's *King John*.

The *Troublesome Raigne of King John* is in two sections, partly in prose and partly in verse, and not divided into acts, the scenes following each other without any attempt at dramatic construction; nor is there, except perhaps in the bastard Faulconbridge, any attempt to develop character out of the situations. The facts, or supposed facts, of history are allowed to speak for themselves, and it is interesting to compare this elaborate production with the compact drama of Shakespeare, whose work it was once believed to be, chiefly on the authority of Pope. It is one of the best examples

of the chronicle history pure and simple, and the author is at the same time alive to the political lessons of his subject—as he understands them—so far as it relates to the struggle with Rome. In part I the king thus addresses Cardinal Pandulph: “Tell thy master so from me, and say John of England said it, that never an Italian priest of them all shall either have tythe, toll, or polling penny out of England; but as I am king, so will I reign next under God, supreme head both over spiritual and temporal; and he that contradicts me in this, I’ll make him hop headlesse.” Again in part II:

If my dying heart deceive me not,
From out these loins shall spring a kingly branch,
Whose arm shall reach unto the gates of Rome,
And with his feet tread down the strumpet’s pride
That sits upon the chair of Babylon.

The facts are drily narrated, but in substance are almost identical with those of Shakespeare’s drama, except that the older play introduces, with a mixture of comic ribaldry, an incident omitted by the latter—the plunder of a Franciscan abbey by Faulconbridge.

Story of *King Lear*.

The story of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* is found in the *True Chronicle History of King Leir and His Three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan and Cordella*, first acted in 1593. Its resemblance to Shakespeare’s tragedy is not more striking than its points of difference; for it has none of the powerful bye-plot of Gloucester and his

sons, and in other respects is far from developing the dramatic capabilities of the subject as portrayed under the touch of the great master. Little is made of the effects of Lear's experience and of the growth of his madness, which in the greater work constitutes the climax of terror and pity; nor is the king accompanied in his wanderings by those strangely contrasted companions, Edmund and the fool. While the ingratitude of Regan and Goneril is poorly depicted, and without the cumulating instances of Shakespeare, the uninteresting episode of the wooing of Cordelia by the king of France, who meets her in disguise, is drawn out to a wearisome length. Yet, with all its defects, the play only wanted the manipulation of a powerful hand to be converted into a tragedy of supreme effectiveness, and while Shakespeare's genius nowhere showed itself with greater force and versatility, it nowhere found more promising materials ready at its command.

Sir Thomas More.

The tragedy of *Sir Thomas More* is a play within a play, the first portion belonging to the class of Moralities and the remainder to the historic drama. The anonymous author has, in a measure, overcome the difficulty of his task by treating More's fall as a heaven-sent calamity, which calls rather for sympathy and pity than for judgment on actions and motives. The hero is first exhibited as the wise judge, the energetic politician and the renowned scholar. He deals out equity at the expense of a justice of the peace; he suppresses

a dangerous insurrection, and holds sportive converse with Erasmus, "the famous clarke of Rotherdam." Then, after the moral play is ended, he sits in high Council of State, and it is here that he declines to submit to the king's demand, after which we are introduced to the house at Chelsea, and the domestic circle which Holbein has rendered familiar. More's cheerful and philosophic bearing is very finely depicted, and we then accompany him to the tower and the scaffold, where, says the personage whose speech concludes the play, "A very learned, worthy gentleman seals error with his blood."

The contention between the houses of York and Lancaster, which connects itself so closely with Shakespeare's plays, was treated by at least one of his predecessors, while Richard III had long been a favorite subject, and there are traces of an old historical play on the life and death of Richard I.

The Origin of English Comedy.

Somewhat older than that of tragedy, the germs of comedy were gradually developed, as in Italy and Spain, from the cumbersome Mystery and Morality plays. To effect this transformation, it was first required that some writer should be found bold enough to throw aside the time-honored abstractions and to substitute for them those personal types which had hitherto been only occasionally introduced. There were already in existence interlocutory poems which needed only the element of action to transform them into drama, while the Moral

plays had shown how easily a dramatic fable could be constructed out of a contrast of characters. To find in the exposition of such a contrast, represented by living human types, materials for dramatic action, was to take the requisite step in advance. This was accomplished by John Heywood, who finally bridged the chasm separating the religious from the secular drama.

John Heywood.

A native of London and educated at Oxford, Heywood was introduced by his friend, Sir Thomas More, to the notice of Henry VIII, his ready wit and musical skill winning the favor of that monarch and of his daughter Mary, both as princess and queen. In the reign of Edward VI, however, he appears to have escaped persecution only as a matter of favor; for he was threatened with "the jerk of the six-stringed whip," though for what offense is not related by his biographers. On the accession of Elizabeth he left his native country and retired to Malines, in Belgium, where he died in 1565, after publishing a collection of his works.

Heywood's Interludes.

Heywood's interludes, as they were commonly termed, are extremely simple, although their wit and humor would have sufficed for more ambitious compositions, forming a strong contrast to the tedious literature of the Religious drama. He tells his story with true Chaucerian raciness, and in his simple scenes

contrives to introduce sketches of character of singular effectiveness. His fondness for a joke seems merely as a ripple on the broad surface of the common sense which overlays the strong and healthy morality of his plays. Of these interludes only one can here be mentioned, and that in such brief outline as will serve to afford some conception of the piece; for a bare description in the way of comment and criticism will convey to the reader no adequate idea of its merits.

In the *Mery Play Between Johan Johan the Husbande, Tyb His Wife and Syr John the Preest*, there are no characters except those mentioned in the title, and the plot is simplicity itself. Johan Johan opens the piece with a soliloquy, in which he announces with heroic boldness his determination to exercise marital authority by "beating his wife." He reviews and overcomes the possible arguments against such a proceeding; but the real argument soon appears in the form of Tyb herself. She meets her husband's suspicions as to her relations with the parish priest by compelling him to ask her friend to partake of a "pye," and it is this which constitutes the central point of interest. It is bad enough, thinks Johan, to suffer injury, but to be deprived of his dinner by the destroyer of his peace is more than he can endure, this scene being worked out with all the robust humor of which Heywood was capable. While the priest and Tyb are making an end of the pie, Johan is made to chafe wax at the fire, to stop a hole in a pail made by his wife. In the end his patience gives way, and he attacks the priest "with his fyst," ending the play with forebodings that his wife

has found means of consoling Syr John, to which it behooves him as her husband at once to put a stop.

First English Comedies.

Isolated Latin comedies had been produced in the original or in English versions or reproductions as early as the reign of Henry VIII, and the Morality and its descendant, the Interlude, pointed the way toward nationalizing and popularizing types equally fitted to divert Italian and English audiences. Thus the earliest extant English comedy, N. Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*, which cannot be dated later than 1551, may be described as a genuinely English adaptation of Plautus, while its successor, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, printed in 1575, and probably written by Bishop Still, has an original, and in consequence a slighter, though by no means unamusing, plot. In the main, however, early English comedy, while occasionally introducing characters of native origin, and appealing to the traditional humors of Will Summer, the court-fool of Henry VIII, or Grim, the collier of Croydon, was content to borrow its themes from Italian or classical sources; Ariosto's *I Suppositi* found a translator in Gascoigne, and the *Menæchmi* of Plautus translators or imitators in writers of rather later dates. While on the one hand the mixture of tragic with comic motives was already leading in the direction of tragi-comedy, the precedent of the Italian pastoral drama encouraged the introduction of figures and stories from classical mythology; and the rapid and versatile influence of Italian comedy

seemed likely to continue to control the progress of the lighter branch of the English drama.

The Elizabethan Age.

Out of such promises as these the glories of the English drama were ripened by the warmth and light of the great Elizabethan age, of which the beginnings may fairly be reckoned from the third decennium of the reign to which it owes its name. The queen's love of dramatic entertainments could not of itself have led, though it undoubtedly contributed, to such a result. Against the attacks which a nascent puritanism was already directing against the stage by the hands of Northbrooke, the repentant playwright Gosson Stubbes and others, were to be set not only the barren favor of royalty, and the more direct patronage of great nobles, but the fact that literary authorities were already weighing the endeavors of the English drama in the balance of respectful criticism, and that in the abstract at least the claims of both tragedy and comedy were upheld by those who shrunk from the desipience of idle pastimes. As the popularity of the stage increased, the functions of playwright and actor, whether combined or not, began to hold out a reasonable promise of personal gain. Nor, above all, was that higher impulse which leads men of talent and genius to attempt forms of art in harmony with the tastes and tendencies of their times wanting to the group of writers who can be remembered by no nobler name than that of Shakespeare's predecessors.

The lives of all these are in part contemporary with the life of Shakespeare himself, nor was there any substantial difference in the circumstances under which most of them lived as dramatic authors. A distinction was clearly maintained between poets and playwrights; but of the contempt entertained for the actor's profession some fell to the share of the dramatist. "Even Lodge," says Dr. Ingleby, "who had indeed never trod the stage, but had written several plays, and had no reason to be ashamed of his antecedents, speaks of the vocation of the play-maker as sharing the odium attaching to the actor." Among the dramatists themselves good-fellowship and literary companionship only at times asserted themselves as stronger than the tendency to mutual jealousy and abuse; of all chapters of dramatic history the annals of the early Elizabethan stage, perhaps, least resemble those of Arcadia.

Two Theatrical Companies.

Moreover, the theatre had hardly found its strength as a powerful element in the national life when it was involved in a bitter dispute with which it had originally no connection. The Marprelate controversy in 1589 led to a stoppage of stage plays which proved only temporary, but the general result of the attempt to make the theatre a vehicle of political abuse and invective was beyond a doubt to coarsen and degrade both plays and players. The true remedy was at last applied when, from about the year 1594, the chief London actors became divided into two great rival

companies—the Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's—which alone received licenses. Instead of half a dozen or more companies whose jealousies communicated themselves to the playwrights belonging to them, there were now, besides the Children of the Chapel, two established bodies of actors, directed by steady and, in the full sense of the word, respectable men. To the Lord Chamberlain's company, which, after being settled at "the Theatre," moved to the Globe on the Bankside in 1599, belonged Shakespeare and Richard Burbage, the latter the greatest of the Elizabethan actors; the Lord Admiral's was managed by Philip Henslowe, the author of the *Diary*, and Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, and was ultimately, in 1600, established at the Fortune. In these and other houses were performed the plays of Elizabethan dramatists, with few adventitious aids, the performance being crowded into a brief afternoon, when only the leisured classes of the population could attend. No woman might appear at a playhouse unless masked; on the stage, down to the Restoration, women's parts continued to be acted by boys.

II.

The Early Elizabethan Drama.

The plays of Shakespeare's contemporaries richly repay the student of the development of dramatic writing, and not less so the reader for pleasure. If from our point of view they are crude in various ways, there is no lack of power and nobility. The "mighty line" of Marlowe alone gave fine distinction to the work of that band of young enthusiasts whose ideals were fixed so high that their very failures have a glory unattained by many of their luckier imitators whose writings have hit popular favor.

A few of these pioneers rank close around their great master, but it is not necessary to dwell at great length upon their work. Elsewhere in this volume will be described the *Tamburlaine* of Marlowe, and Webster's *Duchess of Malfy*, two of the most powerful productions of this period.

Fire, fanaticism and neglect have deprived us of many of the historical plays in existence in Shakespeare's time. Nearly all the gaps in English annals left in the chronicles of Shakespeare were filled in by his contemporaries, by Peele, Marlowe, Heywood,

Fletcher and Ford, thus placing before us a series of dramas representing the chief incidents of three of the most eventful centuries in English history. Yet at least one-half of them are unknown to the modern stage, while many have not been produced since the time of the Stuarts. In truth, most of them could not be reproduced in the form in which they were written, for the continual shifting of scenes alone would prove too severe a strain on the patience of the audience and the resources of the manager. In Shakespeare's time it was no very difficult matter to divide a play into thirty scenes, when the shifting was done by suggestion, and the scenery sketched in a glow of words by the poet. To the onlooker there was no absurdity in a long rhetorical parley between a general in camp and the enemy on the lofty walls of a besieged city. Nor was there any hesitation in fighting battles before spectators whose criticism was disarmed in advance by a pleading apology for shortcomings, and upon whose imagination a burden was adroitly cast that in our languid age would be scornfully discarded. Shakespeare himself makes the appeal—

Pardon, gentles all —— O pardon! —— let us
On your imaginary forces work;
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance;
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings.

And again, in the well-known lines—

O for pity! we shall much disgrace
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
The name of Agincourt.

But to-day, when realism rules the drama, the best of plays will have no hearing unless the stage is filled with pictures closely resembling nature, and the scene-painter shares with the actor and author the plaudits of the audience. Of recent years experiments have been made in reviving a few pieces with the simple setting which sufficed in their day, but the qualified success attained was due rather to antiquarian than to dramatic features.

The selections which follow are from the striking play of *Edward I*, by George Peele. They are strung together as fragments of an incomplete work, and besides their poetical merits they are interesting as belonging to the earliest group of historical dramas.

The scene—II of Act I—is on the coast of Wales, and the entering characters are Welshmen, Lluellen, Rice ap Meredith and Owen ap Rice.

Lluellen.—Come, Rice, and rouse thee for thy country's good:
Follow the man that means to make you great;
Follow, Lluellen, rightful Prince of Wales,
Sprung from the loins of great Cadwallader,
Descended from the line of Trojan Brute.
And though the traitorous Saxons, Normans, Danes,
Have pent the true remains of glorious Troy
Within the western mountains of this isle,
Yet have we hope to climb these stony pales,
When Londoners, as Romans erst, amazed
Shall trembling cry, "Lluellen's at the gate!"

To accomplish this, thus have I brought you forth
 Disguised to Milford-Haven: here attend
 The landing of the lady Elinor.
 Her stay doth make me muse; the wind stands fair,
 And ten days hence we did expect them here.
 Neptune! be favorable to my love,
 And steer her keel with thy three-forkéd mace,
 That from this shore I may behold her sails,
 And in mine arms embrace my dearest dear.

Rice ap Mer.—Brave Prince of Wales, this honorable match
 Cannot but turn to Cambria's common good.
 Simon de Montfort, her thrice-valiant son,
 That in the Barons' wars was general,
 Was loved and honored of the Englishmen:
 When they shall hear she's your espoused wife,
 Assure your grace we shall have great supply
 To make our roads in England mightily.

Owen ap Rice.—What we resolved must strongly be performed
 Before the king returns from Palestine.
 Whilst he wins glory at Jerusalem,
 Let us win ground upon the Englishmen.

Llu.—Owen ap Rice, 'tis that Lluellen fears:
 I fear me Edward will be come ashore
 Ere we can make provision for the war.
 But be it as it will, within his court
 My brother David is, that bears a face
 As if he were my greatest enemy.
 He by this craft shall creep into his heart,
 And give intelligence from time to time
 Of his intentions, drifts, and stratagems.
 Here let us rest upon the salt seashore,
 And while our eyes long for our hearts' desires,
 Let us, like friends, pastime us on the sands.
 Our frolic minds are ominous for good.

Enter Guenther with letters.

Lluellen.—What tidings bringeth Guenther with his haste?
 Say, man, what bodes thy message, good or bad?

Guenther.—Bad, my lord; and all in vain, I wot,
 Thou dart'st thine eyes upon the wallowing main,
 As erst did Ægeus to behold his son,
 To welcome and receive thy welcome love;
 And sable sails he saw, and so may'st thou,
 For whose mishap the brackish seas lament.
 Edward, O Edward!

Llu.—And what of him?

Guen.—Landed he is at Dover with his men,
 From Palestine safe; by his English lords
 Received in triumph, like an earthly god;
 He lives to wear his father's diadem,
 And sway the sword of British Albion.
 But Elinor, thy Elinor!

Llu.—What of her?

Hath amorous Neptune gazed upon my love,
 And stopt her passage with his forkéd mace?
 Or, that I rather fear—— O deadly fear!——
 Doth Nereus withhold my Elinor?

Guen.—Nor Nereus, Neptune, nor other god
 Withholdeth from my gracious lord his love:
 But cruel Edward, that injurious king,
 Withholds thy liefest lovely Elinor,
 Ta'en in a pinnace on the narrow seas
 By four tall ships of Bristow, and with her
 Lord Emerick, her unhappy noble brother,
 As from Montargis hitherward they sailed
 This say in brief these letters tell at large.

(*Lluellen reads.*)

Llu.—Is Longshanks, then, so lusty now become?
 Is my fair love, my beauteous Elinor, ta'en?
 Villains, damn'd villains, not to guard her safe,
 Or fence her sacred person from her foes!
 But if kind Cambria deign me good aspéct,
 To make me chiefest Brute of western Wales,
 I'll short that gain-legg'd Longshanks by the top,
 And make his flesh my murdering falchion's food.
 To arms, true Britons, sprung of Trojans' seed,
 And with your swords write in the Book of Time

Your British names in characters of blood!
 Owen ap Rice, while we stay for further force,
 Prepare, away in post, and take with thee
 A hundred chosen of thy countrymen,
 And scour the marches with your Welshmen's hooks,
 That Englishmen may think the devil has come.
 Rice shall remain with me; make thou thy bode
 In resolution to revenge these wrongs
 With blood of thousands guiltless of this rage.
 Fly thou on them amain!— Edward, my love
 Be thy life's bane!— Follow me, countrymen!
 Words make no way: my Elinor is surprised;
 Robbed am I of the comforts of my life;
 And know I this, and am not venged on him. (Exeunt.)

In the first scene of Act II Lluellen, Sir David and Rice of Meredith meet outside Carnarvon Castle.

Sir David.—Soft! is it not Meredith I behold?

Lluellen.—All good, all friends. Meredith, see the man
 Must make us great, and raise Lluellen's head:
 Fight thou, Lluellen, for thy friend and thee.

Rice ap Mer.—Fight, maugre fortune strong, our battle's strong,
 And bear thy foes before thy pointed lance.

Sir D.—Not too much prowess, good my lord, at once.
 Some talk of policy another while.

Llu.—David, if thou wilt best for me devise,
 Advise my love be rendered to my hand.
 Tell them the chains that Mulciber erst made
 To tie Prometheus' limbs to Caucasus,
 Nor Furies' fangs shall hold me long from her,
 But I will have her from th' usurper's tent,
 My beauteous Elinor! If aught in this,
 If in this case thy wit may boot thy friends,
 Express it, then, in this, in nothing else.

Sir D.—Ay, there's a card that puts us to our trump;
 For might I see the star of Leicester's loins,
 It were enough to darken and obscure

This Edward's glory, fortune, and his pride.
 First, hereof can I put you out of doubt:
 Lord Mortimer of the king hath her in charge,
 And honorably entreats your Elinor.
 Some think he prays Lluellen were in heaven,
 And thereby hopes to couch his love on earth.

Llu.—No: where Lluellen mounts, there Ellen flies.
 Unspeakable are my thoughts of her:
 She's not from me in death to be divorced.
 Go to, it shall be so; so shall it be.
 Edward is full resolvéd of thy faith,
 So are the English lords, and barons all:
 Then what may let thee to intrude on them
 Some new-found stratagem to feel their wit?

Sir D.—It is enough. Meredith, take my weapons;
 I am your prisoner; say so at the least.
 Go hence, and when you parle on the walls,
 Make show of monstrous tyranny you intend
 To execute on me, as on the man
 That shamefully rebels 'gainst kin and kind;
 And 'less thou have thy love, and make thy peace
 With such conditions as shall best concern,
 David must die, say thou, a shameful death.
 Edward, perhaps, with ruth and pity mov'd,
 Will in exchange yield Elinor to thee,
 And thou by me shalt gain thy heart's desire.

Llu.—Sweetly advis'd: David, thou blessest me,
 My brother David, lengthener of my life!—
 Friends, gratulate to me my joyful hopes. (Exeunt.)

Enter King Edward, Sussex, Mortimer, and others.

Edward.—Why, barons, suffer ye our foes to breathe?
 Assault, assault, and charge them all amain!
 They fear, they fly, they faint, they fight in vain.
 But where is gentie David? in his den?
 Loth were I aught but good should him betide.

(An alarm sounds. Enter, on the walls, Lluellen and soldiers.)

Where is the proud disturber of our state,
 Traitor to Wales and to his sovereign?

Lluellen.—Usurper, here I am. What dost thou crave?

Edw.—Welshman, allegiance, which thou ow'st thy king!

Llu.—Traitor, no king, that seeks thy country's sack,
The famous runagate of Christendom.

Edw.—Ambitious rebel, know'st thou what I am,
How great, how famous, and how fortunate?
And dar'st thou carry arms against me here,
Even when thou should'st do reverence at my feet?
Yea, feared and honored in the farthest parts
Hath Edward been, the noble Henry's son.
Traitor, this sword unsheathed hath shinéd oft
With reeking in the blood of Saracens.
Sitting before the gates of Nazareth,
My horse's hoofs I stained in pagan's gore,
Sending whole centuries of heathen souls
To Pluto's house: this sword, this thirsty sword,
Aims at thy head, and shall, I hope, ere long,
Gage and divide thy bowels and thy bulk,
Disloyal villain, thou, and what is more?

Llu.—Why, thinkest thou I will be scared with words?
No: didst thou speak in thunder like to Jove,
Or should'st thou as Briareus, shake at once
A hundred bloody swords with bloody hands,
I tell thee, Longshanks, here he faceth thee
Whom naught can daunt, no, not the stroke of death.
Resolv'd ye see: but see the chance of war:

(Enter David, guarded.)

Know'st thou a traitor if thou seest his head?
Then, Longshanks, look this villain in the face:
This rebel, he hath wrought his country's wreck;
Base rascal, bad and hated in his kind,
Object of wrath, and subject of revenge.

Edw.—Lluellen, call'st thou this the chance of war?
Bad for us all, perdy, but worse for him.—
Courage, Sir David! kings thou know'st must die,
And noble minds all dastard fear defy.

Sir David.—Renowned Edward, star of England's globe,
My liefest lord and sweetest sovereign,
Glorious and happy is this chance to me,

To reap this fame and honor in my death,—
 That I was hewed with foul-defiled hands
 For my belovéd king and country's good,
 And died in grace and favor with my prince.—
 Seize on me, bloody butchers, with your paws:
 It is but temporal that you can inflict.

Edw.—Bravely resolv'd, brave soldier, by my life!

Mortimer.—Lluellen, in the midst of all thy braves,
 How wilt thou use thy brother thou hast ta'en?
 Wilt thou not let his master ransom him?

Llu.—No, nor his mistress, gallant Mortimer,
 With all the gold and silver of the land.

Rice ap Mer.—Ransom this Judas to his father's line!
 Ransom this traitor to his brother's life!
 No. Take that earnest—penny of thy death.—
 (Seems to stab Sir David.)

This touch, my lord, comes nothing near the mark.

Edw.—O villain, hold thy hands! but ask and have.

Llu.—We will not ask nor have. Seest thou these tools?
 (Shows hot pincers.)

These be the dogs shall bait him to the death,
 And shall by piece-meal tear his curséd flesh;
 And in thy sight here shall he hang and pine.

Edw.—O villains, traitors, how will I be venged!

Llu.—What, threat'st thou, Edward? Desperate minds con-
 temn

That fury menaceth: see thy words' effects.
 (Seems to cut Sir David.)

Sir D.—O gracious heavens, dissolve me into clay!
 This tyranny is more than flesh can bear.

Edw.—Bear it, brave mind, sith nothing but thy blood
 May satisfy in this extreme estate.

Sussex.—My lord, it is in vain to threaten them;
 They are resolved, ye see, upon his death.

Edw.—Sussex, his death, they all shall buy it dear:
 Offer them any favor for his life,
 Pardon, or peace, or aught what is beside:
 So love me God as I regard my friends!—

Lluellen, let me have thy brother's life
Even at what rate and ransom thou wilt name.

Llu.—Edward, King Edward, as thou list be term'd,
Thou know'st thou hast my beauteous Elinor:
Produce her forth to prove for David's life;
She may obtain more than a host of men.

Edw.—Wilt thou exchange thy prisoner for thy love?

Llu.—Talk no more to me; let me see her face.

Mort.—Why will your majesty be all so base
To stoop to his demands in everything?

Edw.—Fetch her at once; good Mortimer, be gone.

(Exit Mortimer.)

Rice ap Mer.—Apace, Mortimer, if thou love thy friend.

Edw.—See, Sussex, how he bleedeth in my eye,
That beareth fortune's shock triumphantly.

Rice ap Mer.—News, my lord, a star from out the sea;
The sun is risen and made a summer's day.

(Reënter Mortimer, conducting the Lady Elinor.)

Llu.—What, Nell, sweet Nell, do I behold thy face?
Fall heavens, fleet stars, shine Phœbus' lamp no more!
This is the planet lends this world her light;
Star of my fortune this, that shineth bright,
Queen of my heart, loadstar of my delight,
Fair mould of beauty, miracle of fame.
O, let me die with Elinor in mine arms!

Edw.—Good cheer, Sir David; we shall up anon.

Elinor.—Sweet Prince of Wales, were I within thine arms,
O then should I in peace possess my love,
And heavens open fair their crystal gates,
That I may see the palace of my intent.

Edw.—Lluellen, set thy brother David free:
Let me have him, thou shalt have Elinor.

Llu.—Sooth, Edward, I do prize my Elinor
Dearer than life; but there belongeth more
To these affairs than my content in love:
And to be short, if thou wilt have thy man,
Of whom, I swear, thou thinkest over-well,
The safety of Lluellen and his men

Must be regarded highly in this match.
Say, therefore, and be short, wilt thou give peace
And pardon to Lluellen and his men?

Edw.—I will herein have time to be advis'd.

Llu.—The gates are open'd; enter thee and thine.

Sir D.—The sweetest sun that e'er I saw to shine!

Edw.—Madam, a braddle well begun for thee:

Be thou my guest and Sir Lluellen's love. (Exeunt).

The second scene is on a road in Wales, and the personages are Queen Elinor and Joan in a litter, the Earl of Gloucester and attendants.

Queen Elinor.—Fie, this hot weather, how it makes me sweat!

Heigh-ho, my heart! ah, I am passing faint!

Give me my fan, that I may cool my face.

Hold, take my mask, but see you rumple't not.

This wind and dust, see how it smolders me!

Some drink, good Gloucester, or I die for thirst.

Ah, Ned, thou hast forgot thy Nell I see,

That she is thus enforced to follow thee!

Gloucester.—This air's distemperature, your Majesty,

Noisome through mountain vapors and thick mist,

Unpleasant must be to your company

And you, that ne'er were wont to take the air

Till Flora had perfumed the earth with sweets,

With lilies, roses, mints, and eglantine.

Q. Elinor.—I tell thee, earl, the ground is all too base

For Elinor to honor with her steps;

Whose footpace, when she progressed in the streets

Of Akon and the fair Jerusalem,

Was upon naught but costly arras-points,

Fair island-tapestry, and azured silk;

My milk-white steed treading on cloth of ray,

And trampling proudly underneath the feet

Choice of our English woolen drapery.

Glo.—This climate lowering with congealéd clouds

That take their swelling from the marish soil,
 Fraught with infectious fogs and misty damps,
 Is far unworthy to be once embalmed
 With redolence of thy refreshing breath,
 That sweetens where it lights, as do the flames
 And holy fires of Vesta's sacrifice.

Joan.—Those pleasant fields, new-planted with the spring
 Make Thamesis to mount above the banks,
 And, like a wanton, wallow up and down.
 On Flora's beds and Napæ's silver down.

Glo.—Ah, Wales for me, madam, while you are here;
 No climate good unless your grace be near.
 Would Wales had aught could please you half so well,
 Or any precious thing in Gloucester's gift,
 Whereof your ladyship would challenge me!

Joan.—Well said, my lord! 'tis as my mother says;
 You men have learned to woo a thousand ways.

Glo.—Or, madam, had I learnt, against my need,
 Of all those ways to woo, one way to speed,
 My cunning, then, had been my fortune's guide.

Q. Elinor.—Faith, Joan, I think thou must be Gloucester's
 bride—

Good earl, how near he steps upon her side!
 I'll tell thee, girl, when I was fair and young,
 I found such honey in sweet Edward's tongue,
 As I could never spend one idle walk
 But Ned and I would piece it out with talk.—
 So you, my lord, when you have got your Joan,
 No matter, let queen-mother be alone.
 Woo on, kind Clare, good Gloucester, love thy Joan:
 Her heart is thine, her eye is not her own.

Glo.—This comfort, madam, that your grace doth give
 Binds me in double duty whilst I live.
 Would God, King Edward see and say no less!

Q. Elinor.—Gloucester, I warrant thee upon my life
 My king vouchsafes his daughter for thy wife.
 Sweet Ned hath not forgot, since he did woo,
 The gall of love and all that 'longs thereto.

Glo.—Why, was your grace so coy to one so kind?

Q. Elinor.—Kind, say you, Gloucester! so, methinks, indeed:

It seems he loves his wife no more than needs,
That sends for us in all this speedy haste,
Knowing his queen to be so great with child,
And makes me leave my princely pleasant seats
To come into his ruder part of Wales.

Glo.—His highness hath some secret reason why
He wishes you to move from England's court.
The Welshmen have of long time suitors been,
That when the war of rebels sorts an end,
None might be prince and ruler over them.
But such a one as was their countryman;
Which suit, I think, his grace hath granted them.

Q. Elinor.—So, then, it is King Edward's policy
To have his son—forsooth, son if it be—
A Welshman: well, Welshman it liketh me. (Exeunt.)

The third scene opens with the entry of King Edward and the Nine Lords of Scotland into Hallin Castle at Berwick. The king makes an announcement:

Edward.— Baliol, stand farthest forth:
Baliol, behold, I give the Scottish crown
To thee: wear it with hearty thankfulness.
Sound trumpets, sound, and say all after me,
God save King Baliol, the Scottish king!
(Trumpets.)

All.—God save King Baliol, the Scottish king!

Edw.—Thus, lords, though you require no reason why,
According to the conscience in the cause,
I make John Baliol your anointed king.
Honor and love him, as behooves him best
That is in peace of Scotland's crown possess'd.

Balliol.—Thanks, royal England, for thy honor done.
This justice that hath calm'd our civil strife,
Shall now be sealed with honorable love.
So moved of remorse and piety,

We will erect a college of my name;
 In Oxford will I build, for memory
 Of Baliol's bounty and his gratitude;
 And let me happy days no longer see
 Than here to England loyal I shall be.

Act III discovers King Baliol and his train at Berwick Castle.

Baliol.—Lords of Albania, and my peers in France.
 Since Baliol is invested in his rights,
 And wears the royal Scottish diadem,
 Time is to rouse him, that the world may wot
 Scotland disdains to carry England's yoke.
 Therefore, my friends, thus put in readiness,
 Why slack we time to greet the English king
 With resolute message, to let him know our minds?
 Lord Versses, though thy faith and oath be ta'en
 To follow Baliol's arms for Scotland's right,
 Yet is thy heart to England's honor knit:
 Therefore, in spite of England and thyself,
 Bear thou defiance proudly to thy king;
 Tell him, Albania finds heart and hope
 To shake off England's tyranny betime,
 To rescue Scotland's honor with her sword.
 Lord Bruce, see cast about Lord Versses' neck
 A strangling halter, that he mind his haste.
 How say'st thou, Versses, wilt thou do this message?

Versses.—Although no common post, yet, for my king,
 I will to England, maugre England's might,
 And do my errand boldly, as becomes;
 Albeit I honor English Edward's name,
 And hold these slavish contemnments to scorn.

The second scene is in Carnarvon Castle, where Queen Elinor is seated with Joan, Gloucester and a nurse with the baby Prince of Wales.

(Enter King Edward and Lancaster.)

Edward.—How doth my Nell, mine own, my love, my wife,
My heart, my dear, my dove, my queen, my wife?

Queen Elinor.—Ned, art thou come, sweet Ned? welcome, my
joy!

Thy Nell presents thee with a lovely boy.

Whom do I see? my lord of Lancaster!

Welcome most heartily.

Lancaster.—

I thank your grace.

Edw.—But tell me now, lappéd in lily bands,

How with my queen, my lovely one, it stands.

Q. Elinor.—Sick, mine own Ned, sick for thy company;

That lur'd her with thy love—lies all so fair,

To follow thee unwieldy in thy war.

But I forgive thee, Ned, my life's delight,

So thy young son thou see be bravely dight,

And in Carnarvon christened royally.

Sweet love, let him be lapped most curiously:

He is thine own, as true as he is mine;

Take order, then, that he be passing fine.

Edw.—My, lovely lady, let that care be less:

For my young son the country will I feast,

And have him borne as bravely to the font

As ever yet king's son to christening went.

Lack thou no precious thing to comfort thee,

Dearer than England's diadem unto me.

Q. Elinor.—Gramercy, Ned! Now, well remembered yet!

I have a suit but you must not deny it.—

Where is my lord of Gloucester, Clare, my guide?—

Good Ned, let Joan of Akon be his bride;

Assure yourself that they are thoroughly woo'd.

Gloucester.—(Aside.) God send the king be taken in the mood!

Edw.—Then, niece, 'tis like that you shall have a husband.

Come hither, Gloucester; hold, give her thy hand;

Take her, sole daughter to the queen of England.

(Gives Joan to Gloucester.)

For news he brought, Nell, of my young son,

I promis'd him as much as I have done.

Glo.—We humbly thank you.

Lan.— Joy may them betide,
A gallant bridegroom and a princely bride!

Edw.—Now say, sweet queen, what doth my lady crave?
Tell me what name shall this young Welshman have,
Born Prince of Wales by Cambria's full consent?

Q. Elinor.—Edward, the name that doth me well content.

Edw.—Then Edward of Carnarvon shall he be,
And Prince of Wales, christened in royalty.

* * * * *

(Enter Versses.)

What tidings brings Lord Versses to our court?

Versses.—Tidings to make thee tremble, English king.

Edward.—Me tremble, boy! must not be news from Scotland
Can once make English Edward stand aghast.

Ver.—Baliol hath chosen at this time to stir;
To rouse him lion-like, and cast the yoke
That Scots ingloriously have borne from thee
And all the predecessors of thy line;
And makes his roads to reobtain his right,
And for his homage sends thee all despite.

Lancaster.—Why, how now, princex! prat'st thou to a king?

Ver.—I do my message truly from my king:
This sword and target chide in louder terms.
I bring defiance from king Baliol
To English Edward and his barons all.

Edw.—Marry, methinks so, thou defiest me!

Ver.—Baliol, my king, in Berwick makes his court:
His camp he spreads upon the sandy plain,
And dares thee to the battle in his right.

Lan.—What, court and camp in Englishmen's despite?

Edw.—Hold, messenger: commend me to thy king:
Wear thou my chain, and carry this to him.
Greet all his rout of rebels more or less;
Tell them such shameful end will hit them all;
And wend with this as resolutely back
As thou to England brought'st thy Scottish braves.

Disdainfully, tell Baliol from us,
We'll rouse him from his hold, and make him soon
Dislodge his camp and take his wall'd town.
Say what I bid thee, Versses, to his teeth,
And earn this favor and a better thing.

Ver.—Yes, King of England, whom my heart loves;
Think, as I promis'd him to brave thee here,
So shall I bid John Baliol 'base from thee. (Exit.)

Edw.—Why, now is mighty England's harvest ripe:
Barons, now may we reap the rich renown
That under warlike colors springs in field,
And grows where ensigns waved upon the plains.
False Baliol, Berwick is no hold of proof
To shroud thee from the strength of Edward's arm:
No, Scot; thy treason's fear shall make the breach
For England's pure renown to enter in.

All.—Amain, amain, upon these treacherous Scots!
Amain, say all, upon these treacherous Scots!

Edw.—While we with Edmund, Gloucester, and the rest,
With speedy journeys gather up our forces,
And beat these braving Scots from England's bounds,
Mortimer, thou shalt take the rout in task
That revel here and spoil fair Cambria.
My queen, when she is strong and well a-foot,
Shall post to London and repose her there.
Then God shall send us haply all to meet,
And joy the honors of our victories.
Baliol, I come——proud Baliol and ingrate——
Prepar'd to chase thy men from England's gate!
(Exeunt.)

The fourth act opens on a battlefield near Shrewsbury.

(Enter Mortimer, with soldiers, pursuing the rebels.)

Mortimer.—Strike up the drum! follow, pursue, and chase!
Follow, pursue, spare not the proudest head
That havocks England's sacred royalty! (Exeunt.)

(Enter Lluellen, running.)

Lluellen.—The angry heavens frown on Britain's face
 To eclipse the glory of fair Cambria:
 With sore aspects the dreadful planets lower.
 Lluellen, basely turn thy back and fly?
 No, Welshmen fight it to the last and die;
 For if my men safely have got the bride,
 Careless of chance I'll reck no sour event.
 England's broad womb hath not that arméd band
 That can expel Lluellen from his land.

(Enter Sir David, running.)

Sir David.—Fly, Lord of Cambria! fly, Prince of Wales!
 Sweet brother, fly! the field is won and lost:
 Thou art beset with England's furious troops,
 And cursed Mortimer, like a lion, leads.
 Our men have got the bride, but all in vain:
 The Englishmen are come upon our backs.
 Either flee or die, for Edward hath the day.
 For me, I have my rescue in my hand:
 England on me no torments shall inflict.
 Farewell, Lluellen, till we meet in heaven. (Exit.)

(Enter soldiers.)

First Soldier.—Follow, pursue! Lie there, whate'er thou be.
 (Slays Lluellen.)
 Yet soft, my hearts! let us his countenance see.
 This is the prince; I know him by his face:
 O gracious fortune, that me happy made
 To spoil the weed that chokes fair Cambria!
 Hale him from hence, and in this bosky wood
 Bury his corpse; but for his head, I vow
 I will present our governor with the same. (Exeunt.)

(Enter Mortimer with soldiers, and Sir David, prisoner.)

Mortimer.—Bind fast the traitor and bring him away,
 Come on: for those that have submission made,

Their pardons, in the king's name, I pronounce;
So God save King Edward!

All.—

God save the king!

(*Exeunt.*)

The last scene is in Berwick Castle.

(*Enter King Edward and his lords, with Baliol prisoner.*)

Edward.—Now, trothless king, what fruits have braving
boasts?

What end hath treason but a sudden fall?
Such as have known thy life and bringing up,
Have praised thee for thy learning and thy art:
How comes it, then, that thou forget'st thy books
That schooled thee to forget ingratitude?
Unkind! This hand hath 'nointed thee a king;
This tongue pronounced the sentence of thy ruth:
If thou, in lieu of mine unfeignéd love,
Hast levied arms for to attempt my crown,
Now see the fruits: thy glories are dispersed
And heifer-like, sith thou hast passed thy bounds,
Thy sturdy neck must stoop to bear this yoke.

Baliol.—I took this lesson, Edward, from my book,
To keep a just equality of mind,
Content with every fortune as it comes:
So can'st thou threat no more than I expect.

Edw.—So, sir; your moderation is enforced;
Your goodly glosses cannot make it good.

Bal.—Then will I keep in silence what I mean,
Since Edward thinks my meaning is not good.

Edw.—Nay, Baliol, speak forth, if there yet remain
A little remnant of persuading art.

Bal.—If cunning may have power to win the king,
Let those employ it that can flatter him;
If honor'd deed may reconcile the king,
It lies in me to give and him to take.

Edw.—Why, what remains for Baliol now to give?

Bal.—Allegiance, as becomes a royal king.

Edw.—What league of faith where league is broken once?

Bal.—The greater hope in them that once have fallen.

Edw.—But foolish are those monarchs that do yield
A conquered realm upon submissive vows.

Bal.—There, take my crown, and so redeem my life.

Edw.—Ay, sir; that was the choicest plea of both;
For whoso quells the pomp of haughty minds,
And breaks their staff whereon they build their trust,
Is sure in wanting power they cannot harm.
Baliol shall live; but yet within such bounds
That, if his wings grow flig, they may be clipt.

(Enter a messenger.)

Messenger.—Honor and fortune wait upon the crown
Of princely Edward, England's valiant king!

Edward.—Thanks, messenger; and if my God vouchsafe
That wingéd Honor wait upon my throne,
I'll make her spread her plumes upon their heads
Whose true allegiance doth confirm the crown.
What news in Wales? how wends our business there?

Mes.—The false disturber of that wasted soil,
With his adherents, is surpris'd, my king,
And in assurance he shall start no more;
Breathless he lies, and headless, too, my lord.
The circumstance these lines shall here unfold.

(Gives letter.)

Edw.—A harmful weed, by wisdom rooted out,
Can never hurt the true engrafted plant.
Hie thee back, messenger, to Shrewsbury,
Bid Mortimer, thy master, speed him fast,
And with his fortune welcome us to London.
I long to see my beauteous lovely queen.

There is the true dramatic ring in Peele's work, and gleams of genuine poetry. To modern ears much of the declamation is overdone, yet it stirs our pulses and is not out of harmony with the temper and the deeds

of the characters portrayed. Shakespeare drew freely on these compositions for the making of his historical plays. His style is purer, but he fully shared the fondness of his compeers and predecessors for grandiloquent periods.

Many considerations, which cannot be noted here, must be taken into account in surveying the literature of the Elizabethan drama. No dramatic literature which can claim to rank beside it—not even that of Athens nor those of modern Italy and Spain, nor those of France and Germany in their classic periods—had to contend against such odds; a mighty inherent strength alone insured to it the vitality which it so triumphantly asserted and which enabled it to run so marvelous a course. Had the creative activity of Elizabethan genius failed to seek in the drama its most attractive and appropriate sphere, the national literature would have lacked its most splendid and peculiar growth. The rich mine of the English language would have remained unexplored and unworked in its fullest capabilities, and the national history and life of England would have missed their most pregnant interpretation.

Lyly, Marlowe and Peele.

Among Shakespeare's predecessors John Lyly, whose plays were written for the Children of the Chapel and the Children of St. Paul's, holds a position apart in dramatic literature. The euphuism, to which his famous romance—*Euphues*—gave its name, likewise distinguishes his mythological, quasi-historical, allegorical and

satirical comedies. But his real service to the progress of the drama is to be sought neither in his choice of subjects nor in his imagery, though to his fondness for fairy-lore and for the whole phantasmagoria of legend, classical as well as romantic, his contemporaries, and Shakespeare in particular, were indebted for precedents. It lies in his adoption of Gascoigne's innovation of writing plays in prose; and in his having, though under the fetters of an affected and vicious style, given the first example of brisk and vivacious dialogue—an example to which even Shakespeare and Jonson were indebted. Thomas Kyd, the author of the *Spanish Tragedy*, possesses some of the characteristics, but none of the genius, of the greatest tragic dramatist who preceded Shakespeare. No slighter tribute than this is assuredly the due of Christopher Marlowe, whose violent end prematurely closed a career of dazzling brilliancy. His earliest play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, in which the use of blank verse was introduced upon the English stage, while full of the "high-sounding terms" of an extravagant and often bombastic diction, is marked by the passion which was this poet's most characteristic feature, and which was to find expression so luxuriantly in his *Doctor Faustus*, and still more in his *Jew of Malta*. His masterpiece, *Edward II*, is a tragedy of singular pathos and of a dramatic power unapproached by any of his contemporaries excepting only Shakespeare. George Peele was a far more versatile writer, even as a dramatist; but though his plays contain passages of exquisite beauty and strength, as has been shown, they cannot be ranked by the side of *Edward II*. His finest

play is undoubtedly *David and Bethsabe*, which resembles *Edward I* in construction, but far surpasses it in beauty of language and versification, besides treating the subject with superior dignity.

If the difference between Peele and Shakespeare is still, in many respects besides that of genius, an immeasurable one, we seem to come into something like a Shakespearean atmosphere in more than one passage of the plays of the unfortunate Robert Greene, unfortunate perhaps in nothing more than in his notorious enmity to Shakespeare himself. His style, which shone most brightly in plays treating English life and scenes, was in the main free from the pedantry which occasionally besets the flight of Peele's and even of Marlowe's muse; and his most delightful work at all events seems to breathe something of that indescribable freshness which we recognize, if not as a peculiarly Shakespearean characteristic, at least as one belonging to none but a truly national art. Thomas Lodge, Thomas Nash, the redoubtable pamphleteer; Henry Chettle, who worked the chords of both pity and terror with equal vigor, and Anthony Munday, better remembered for his city pageants than for his plays, are also among the more generally-known writers of the early Elizabethan drama, though not all of them can, strictly speaking, be called predecessors of Shakespeare.

The common characteristics of nearly all these dramatists were in accordance with those of the great age to which they belonged. Stirring times called for stirring themes, such as Mahomet, Scipio and Tamerlane, and these again for a corresponding vigor of treatment.

Neatness and symmetry of construction were neglected for fullness and variety of matter. Novelty and grandeur of subject seemed well matched by a swelling amplitude and often by reckless extravagance of diction. As if from an inner necessity, the balance of rhymed couplets gave way to the impetuous march of blank verse; "strong lines" were as inevitably called for as strong situations and strong characters. Distinct as the chief of these poets are from one another through the marks impressed upon both form and matter by individual genius, yet the stamp of the age is upon them all. Writing only for the stage, of which some possessed a personal experience, they acquired an instinctive insight into the laws of dramatic cause and effect, and infused a warm vitality into the dramatic literature which they produced, so to speak, for immediate consumption. On the other hand, the same cause made rapidity of workmanship indispensable to a successful playwright. How a play was produced, how many hands had been at work upon it, what loans and what spoliations had been made in the process, were considerations of less moment than the question whether it was produced and whether it succeeded. His harness, frequently double or triple, was inseparable from the lusty Pegasus of the early English drama, and its genius toiled, to borrow the phrase of the Attic comedian, "like an Arcadian mercenary."

This period of English drama, though far from being one of crude effort, could not therefore yet be one of full consummation. In tragedy the advance which had been made in the choice of great themes, in knitting

closer the connection between the theatre and the national history, in vindicating to passion its rights to adequate expression, was already enormous. In comedy the advance had been less decisive and less independent. Much had been gained in reaching greater freedom of form and something in enlarging the range of subjects; but artificiality had proved a snare in the one direction, while the license of the comic stage, upheld by favorite "clowns," such as Kemp or Tarleton, had not succumbed before more exacting demands. The way of escaping the dilemma had, however, been already recognized to lie in the construction of suitable plots, for which a full storehouse was open in the popular traditions preserved in national ballads, and in the growing literature of translated foreign fiction, or of native imitations of it. Meanwhile the aberration of the comic stage to political and religious controversy, which it could never hope to treat with real freedom in a country provided with a strong monarchy and a dogmatic religion, seemed likely to extinguish the promise of romantic comedy.

Merits of Shakespeare's Predecessors.

Not all, or nearly all, the dramatic works of Shakespeare's predecessors will bear the crucial test. Lyly, unless a pleasing lyrical gift be thought worthy of being taken into account, has been justly described as "a bel esprit, but no poet." Wit, ingenuity and reading he possessed and displayed in abundance; but even the extreme mannerism of style identified with his prose-

romances, and reappearing in all his dramatic works, was not of his own invention. The dexterity with which he moved in the elaborate fetters which he had in this respect imposed upon himself excited the admiration and seemed to challenge the rivalry of his contemporaries, but the progress of the national drama, as a branch of poetic literature, was, except in the domestication of prose-dialogue on the stage, impeded rather than advanced by the father of euphuism. More to be regretted as an aberration from the true principles of poetic creation, though less productive of harm by provoking imitators than his mannerism of style, was Lyly's treatment of his subjects. He depicted personal allegories with so profound a skill on the background of classical mythology that only the amateur detectives of literary criticism will ever derive a thorough enjoyment from the study of his plays. A curious learning alone can find the key; but when it is found it unlocks no secrets of genius. In this direction he doubtless taught something to the mask-writers of his own age as well as of subsequent generations, but nothing to the legitimate drama. The influence of Lyly is traceable in most of his contemporaries, and even in Shakespeare himself; but, with the exception noted above, it affected only the transitory elements in their creations. Happily, the conditions of poetic art are such that this kind of influence vanishes from sight as our attention fixes itself upon more vital and more significant characteristics. Thus the temple of the Elizabethan drama is no more vitiated by the extravagancies of Lyly than is St. Peter's at Rome by the meretricious beauties of

Bernini, whose tawdry compositions were grafted on the sublime conceptions of Michaelangelo.

It was not by exaggerating in the direction of artificiality the traditions of our earlier drama that the predecessors of Shakespeare began to make the dramatic department of English literature its principal feature. What they found was a drama which, though popular in the main source of its origin, was artificial by reason of its imitation of a limited class of models, while at the same time it was still crude and inadequate in form. Tragedy had attached itself to the footsteps of Seneca and his Italian followers in choice of subjects and in method of construction; it was essentially epical in its treatment, the lyrical elements being organically connected with the epical; it occupied itself, so to speak, with the statement of an action rather than with its development out of the characters of the agents. Such was the essential nature of most of the tragedies already described, from *Gorboduc* to *Tancred and Gismund*, from *Promos and Cassandra* to *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. The hopeful beginnings of the historical drama on national subjects, the *Chronicle Histories*, had from the nature of the case even more emphatically exhibited the same characteristics. On the other hand, they had, in comparative warmth and energy of manner, surpassed plays the subjects of which lacked the same connection with the national consciousness, and which moved in the less congenial sphere of classical history and legend or of foreign romance. Comedy was still hovering between the imitation of a late classical type, the reproduction of "Italian devises," the use of the old

mythological and revived pastoral machinery, and the irrepressible desire to introduce, with the incidental ease which comedy hardly ever fails to permit, types of existing manners and of the enduring varieties of human character. Where tragedy and comedy had been combined, their union had been of a perfunctory nature, and tragi-comedy was an avowed hybrid, manifestly exhibiting an imperfect development of species.

Choice of Themes.

The genius of the predecessors of Shakespeare threw itself with especial ardor into the advancement of the tragic stage. The greatness of the times made this inevitable to poetic capacities of a powerful cast. As the genius of Æschylus was in sympathy with the mighty movement of the great Persian wars, so Marlowe and his fellows, but Marlowe preëminently, claimed for tragedy the full grandeur of heroic themes. A vast canvas seemed needed for such purposes, and it was spread with no faltering hand by the authors of *Tamerlane* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, of *The Battle of Alcazar* and *The Wounds of Civil War*. Nor could subjects of national history fail to commend themselves to a constantly increasing sympathy and to be treated with a new vigor and impetus; in the hands of Peele and Marlowe, at all events, the Chronicle History made a mighty stride in advance toward historical tragedy; and of the early histories ascribed to Shakespeare the world is still in doubt whether they were written by him or by his predecessors. However this may be, in the national

historical drama of the English stage there is no gulf, there is hardly a gap, to interrupt its onward course. In this branch of their endeavor the group of writers under discussion were fully adequate to the progressive demands of their literary task.

The choice of great themes, of which *Tamerlane* set the example, in the first instance rather favored than discouraged an epical manner of treatment, which the dramatic reproduction of the *Chronicles* seemed to make absolutely inevitable. The contemplation of actions mighty in their dimensions and marvellous in their results overpowered reflection on their causes. To will and to achieve seemed the sum of heroic action; to undertake and to fail the full significance of a tragic catastrophe. Marlowe's fiery genius inspired in him a poetic sympathy with passionate resolve, with victorious achievement, with fatal failure. Life in its heroic aspect seemed a struggle of man against fate—it might be said against the conditions of human life itself. In a less impassioned degree the view which other dramatists, as Kyd and Peele, took of the tragic conflict between heroism and circumstance is of the same kind.

Herein they saw but half, and only the lesser half, of the significance of real tragic effect. They knew how to mark with drastic force the great conditions of the conflict, how to express with overpowering energy the terror of the catastrophe. Hence the aberration, which needs no exemplifying, toward the horrible as a source of effect. Marlowe's want of humor made him a prominent offender in this direction, but there is little

to choose between his worst extravagances and the gratification of the morbid taste which prompted them in *Titus Andronicus*. The dramatists of this period had not learned the great lessons taught by the highest examples of the tragic art. They had not learned that vehement passion does not suffice to render a poetic character dramatic; they had not learned that in the connection between the causation of a tragic conflict and its solution lies the really purifying force of its presentment.

Characterization.

The art of dramatic characterization, in which lies the chief and crowning greatness of Shakespeare, was not inherited by him from his predecessors, though in some of them, notably in Greene, there are proofs of its gradual growth. The conflict, not between man's power and his will, but between his nature and his will, is the real subject of the noblest dramatic art. Marlowe's Faustus perishes because he attempts more than it is allowed to human skill to attempt; Hamlet because his will imposes on him a task to which his nature is unequal. What Marlowe only vaguely felt—that his hero was the author of his own catastrophe—Shakespeare clearly perceived and distinctly expressed. The study of character is the indispensable condition of its depiction as a dramatic reality. Marlowe is too impatient to advance the action of his play to develop it out of its characters. Sometimes, as in the *Jew of Malta*, he begins with a perceptible endeavor; sometimes, as in the *Massacre*, he eschews all efforts in this

direction. Of other contemporary dramatists, Greene, though his hand is lighter, yet displays a more certain touch, and in his *Jane of Scotland* and other plays there is real evidence of power of characterization.

Marlowe and his fellow-dramatists had not brought home to themselves, and could not therefore bring home to their audiences, the real relation between fate and human responsibility. Revenge, for instance, which plays so important a part as the main dramatic motive in a large number of their tragedies, is treated as an inevitable law, as a necessity of Fate. Herein ancient tragedy might seem to furnish a misleading precedent; but ancient tragedy was able to harmonize the working of Fate with the providence of the gods; which was beyond the art of Marlowe and his brethren. The former stood on the basis of the continuity of legend; and even within the bounds of a single trilogy it was possible to show that tragic consummation is not fear, but hope. Victory is the goddess appealed to at the close of more than one Greek tragedy, and there are none which preach the dull, dead fallacy of the irresistible power of circumstances.

But apart from the question of such precedent, the tragedy which is complete in itself can at all times indicate the solution of its conflict, so long as it allows no doubt to remain as to its real causation. The solution lies in the eternal justice of great moral laws, vindicated by the suffering productive of pity and terror which their violation brings forth. Who can fail to recognize this solution in *Richard III*, in *Coriolanus*, in any of Shakespeare's mature tragedies; who will

not seek it in vain in most of the works of his predecessors?

It is in no spirit of depreciation that the defects of the early Elizabethan dramatists have been pointed out. The advance which they had made in choosing great themes for tragic treatment, in sustaining and advancing the dramatic reproduction of passages of national history, in vindicating to passion its right of adequate expression, in beginning to cultivate the art of dramatic characterization, was, as a whole, remarkable. If we are justified in treating the age of Shakespeare's predecessors as a different one from that of Shakespeare himself we need not regard the former as one of mere crude effort and the latter of perfect consummation. They did, however, lack the creative genius which Shakespeare possessed in abundant, and Marlowe in minor, degree.

Originality.

In comedy the advance had been less decisive, and in no branch of the drama is Shakespeare's originality more marked than in the new spirit which he infused into the English comic drama, amid difficulties to which his efforts seem to have temporarily succumbed. Lyly had done much to facilitate greater freedom of form, and something to enlarge the range of subjects; yet, on the other hand, his laborious endeavors, and those of Nash, impeded the progress of national comedy by leading, as they did, to the cultivation of essentially artificial species. A superabundance of wit, serviceable

as it is at all times to the pamphleteer and the comic essayist, is a danger and a snare to those who essay the drama. It would not be difficult to adduce modern examples; but it is sufficiently attested by the instances before us. Unless the wit of the author is subordinate to his dramatic intention, comic characterization, in which lies the real secret of supreme comic effect, suffers at the expense of mere brilliancy or scintillation of dialogue. A peculiar danger in this respect besets our earlier dramatists in consequence of the usage allowing full license of comic extravagance to the clown, whose ambition it was to say very much more than was set down for him. Kemp and Tarleton were not hampered by a prohibition against adding anything of their own. On the contrary, as Hall tells us, they were free

To laugh and grin and frame the mimic face,
And jostle straight into the prince's place.

The way out of the difficulty lay in the construction of suitable plots, for which a full storehouse was prepared in the popular traditions preserved in national ballads, and in the growing literature of translated foreign fiction, or of native imitations of it. In the former, Greene at least found materials for comic writing of the highest promise; Peele was, perhaps, nearest to him, nor should Munday's endeavors be overlooked.

Diction and Versification.

To one other point attention may be directed. In no respect had a greater advance been made by Shake-

speare's predecessors than in the outward form of dramatic composition—in diction and versification. Here again the most effective impulse had been given by Marlowe, when in his *Tamerlane* he introduced blank verse into the popular drama. Not long before, in his translation of Ariosto's *Suppositi*, Gascoigne had given the first example of the use of prose in comedy, and Lyly had set the stamp of fashion upon it. The two innovations, taken together, supplied the adequate forms for Shakespeare's art. So long as rhyme prevailed—and its fashion was long and obstinate—true life, which lies in continuity, was impossible to dramatic diction. Marlowe still thought that each line should stand by itself, the sense marking itself off coincidentally with the termination of the verse, and it was for this reason that he forged his lines with such vigor of expression. But this could only be a transitional phase of blank verse, and was so even in Marlowe himself. In his management of metre Shakespeare surpassed his predecessors in freedom, but it was now merely a question of degree; the means themselves had been placed at his disposal by those who came before him. Nor was the free use of prose in comic passages less favorable to the emancipation of the English drama from the trammels of tradition. Lyly, who used it in all his plays, although he tortured it according to the laws of his own style, did good service by establishing its right to be heard on the stage. The great masters of comic dialogue, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and those who followed them, knew how to profit by the inheritance.

III.

Shakespeare and His Age.

Before we join the company of enthusiastic searchers for new facts, great or small, that can bring the personality of Shakespeare into clearer view, let us gauge the towering majesty of his intellectual grandeur in a short glimpse from the gate of this twentieth century, seeing him in the mellowing perspective. Hallam's fine summary places the man upon the right plane.

"The name of Shakespeare is the greatest in our literature; it is the greatest in all literature. No man ever came near him in the creative powers of his mind. No man had ever such strength at once and such variety of imagination. Coleridge has most felicitously applied to him a Greek epithet . . . the thousand-souled—the myriad-minded—Shakespeare. The number of characters in his plays is astonishingly great, without reckoning those which, although transient, have often their individuality all distinct, all types of human life in well-defined differences. . . . Compare with him Homer, the tragedians of Greece, the poets of Italy, Plautus, Cervantes, Molière, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, Richardson, Scott, the Romancers of the elder

or later schools, one man has far more than surpassed them all. Others may have been as sublime, others may have been more pathetic, others may have equalled him in grace and purity of language, and have shunned some of his faults, but the philosophy of Shakespeare, his intimate searching out of the human heart, whether in the gnomic form of sentence or in the dramatic exhibition of character, is a grand peculiarity of his own."

Such is the tribute which one of the greatest of English essayists pays to the greatest of English bards, and in this he does but voice the sentiment of the literary world; of all, indeed, who have listened to the mighty tones of the great master.

The few facts that are known as to the personal history of England's national poet have been a thousand times related; but little has thus far been said of the educational influences which helped to stimulate his powers, to evoke and strengthen his sympathies, and prepare him for his future work. Before Shakespeare began his career as a dramatist, more than twenty years of his life were passed at Stratford, in the middle shire of the picturesque and richly storied English Midlands, all their beauties being absorbed, as it were, into his blood, and becoming to him almost as the breath of life. Of his home, his parents, and his domestic environment, we know much more than of his personality, and these powerful factors must have acted with redoubled force on a mind so sensitive and richly endowed as his. The portion of Warwickshire in which Shakespeare lived included the thickly wooded region of which the famous forest of Arden was the centre, not greatly changed

from the time of Lear's description of the realm assigned to his daughter Goneril:—

Of all these bounds,—even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads—
We make thee lady.

The Arden District.

Though encroached upon by the axe and plough, the Arden district still retained enough of its primitive character to fill the poet's imagination with the inspiring sweetness of woodland haunts, the beauty, variety and freedom of sylvan life, and thus to impart to the scenery of *As You Like It* the vivid freshness and reality of a living experience. In this delightful comedy all the details of forest life are touched with so light but sure a hand as to prove the writer's familiarity with the whole art of venery, his thorough knowledge of the "highest franchise of noble and princely pleasure" which the royal demesnes of wood and park afforded. In referring to the marches or margins on the outskirts of the forests, legally known as purlieus, Shakespeare indeed displays a technical accuracy which seems to indicate that, in his early rambles about the forest and casual discourse with its woodmen and keepers, he had picked up the legal phases of sylvan economy, as well as enjoyed the freedom and charm of forest life. Throughout the purlieus the forest laws were only partially in force, while the rights of individual owners were fully recognized. Thus Corin's mas-

ter, dwelling, as Rosalind says in a quaint simile that betrays her sex, "here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat," could sell "his cote, his flocks, and bounds of feed," and Rosalind and Celia could purchase "the cottage, the pasture, and the flock."

Deer-hunting.

Only those specially privileged could hunt venison within the forest; but if the deer strayed beyond the forest bounds, they could be freely followed by the dwellers in the purlieus, and these hunting-grounds outside the forest precincts were, in many cases, of extensive area. Thus does the banished duke, while a casual denizen of the forest, propose to make war on its native citizens:—

Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools,
Being native burghers of this desert city,
Should, in their own confines, with forkéd heads,
Have their round haunches gored.

The melancholy Jacques, who is ever repining, with his cynical sentimentalism, considers it a special outrage

To fright the animals, and to kill them up,
In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

Not only in *As You Like It*, but in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and indeed throughout his dramatic works,

Shakespeare displays an intimate knowledge of forest life, and it is certain that he gained it chiefly from his familiarity with the Arden district. Far to the north of Stratford it extended in all its amplitude and variety of hill and dale, leafy covert and sunny glade, giant oaks and tangled thicket—the woodland stillness broken by the noise of brawling brooks, of feathered outeries and flutterings overhead, and by dappled herds sweeping across the open lawns or twinkling in the shadowy bracken. The deer-stealing tradition is sufficient evidence of the poet's love of daring exploits in this region of vert and venison, and of his devotion, perhaps in a somewhat irregular way, to the attractive woodcraft of the park, the warren, and the chase.

Stratford and Its Neighborhood.

The traditional scene of the adventure was Charlecote park, a few miles northeast of Stratford; but the poet's early wanderings extended much further afield. From Stratford he would pass to Henley and Hampton, to Kenilworth castle, to Stoneleigh abbey, to Warwick keep, and Guy's cliff, the last described by the antiquarian Camden as a remarkably beautiful spot. "Under this hill," he says, "hard by the river Avon, standeth Guy-cliffe, the dwelling-house of Sir Thomas Beau—foe, and the very seate itselfe of pleasantnesse. There have ye a shady little wood, cleere and crystall springs, mossy bottomes and caves, medowes alwaies fresh and greene, the river rumbling here and there among the stones with his stream making a milde noise

and gentle whispering, and besides all this, solitary and stille quietnesse, things most grateful to the Muses." The entire region was richly wooded, the castles and secularized monasteries being paled off within their own parks and grounds from the sylvan wilderness beyond. Some of them, like the celebrated castle of the Mountfords, had been dismantled in the wars of the Roses; but at every point of the journey were "towers and battlements bosomed high in tufted trees." Even at the present day there are more woods and parks in the Arden district than in any county in England.

The central street of Stratford forms a portion of the old Roman road that runs northward to Birmingham and Chester, two others branching off to the east and west. In the sixteenth century it consisted only of a few wood and plaster houses, with low gable roofs, dotting at intervals the roads and cross streets that connected them with each other and with the river. Most of them were surrounded with large gardens, and the space between the houses, together with the unusual width of the streets, gave to the place an open and cheerful look. As prosperity increased, the scattered dwellings closed up their ranks, and presented an almost solid front of stores and hostelryes to the yeomen and graziers, who, with their wives and families, frequented the town on fair and market days. But in Shakespeare's time an irregular line of gables and porches, of penthouse walls and garden palings, with patches of flowers and overarching foliage between, varied the view and refreshed the eye. The thoroughfares took the shape of a central cross, and at the point

of intersection stood the High Cross, a solid stone building with steps below and open arches above, from which proclamations were made, and, as in London and other large towns, sermons were sometimes delivered. An open space around the High Cross was the centre of trading on market-days, and on this site, at a later period, a market house was built.

One of the few traditions preserved of Shakespeare is that, even in the most active period of his London career, he always visited Stratford at least once a year. We know that, during his absence, he continued to take the liveliest interest in the affairs of his native village, and though London was his professional headquarters, he always regarded Stratford as his home. Among other evidences of his local attachment is the part which he took in opposing the enclosure of Welcombe common. As his own proprietary rights were not affected, his strong expression of feeling on this occasion can only refer to its public advantages, its beauty and associations. Welcombe was the most picturesque of Stratford's suburbs. Its hills, divided by the leafy Dingles, with pathways winding irregularly through blue-bell depths and briery hollows, afforded one of the finest panoramic views in the neighborhood. Every acre of the ground was associated with the happiest days of Shakespeare's youth. In his boyish holidays he had repeatedly crossed and recrossed the unfenced fields at the foot of the Welcombe hills on his way to the rustic scenes of his uncle Henry's farm in the outlying forest village. He knew by heart every boundary tree and stone and bank, every pond and sheep-pool,

every barn and cattle-shed, throughout the whole well-frequented circuit. In his own emphatic language, uttered when he had come to spend his last years at Stratford, after the turmoil and excitement of London life, "he could not bear the enclosing of Welcombe." In these words, spoken while revisiting the scenes of his youth—the only authoritative fragment of his conversation that has been preserved to us—is shown his deep and life-long attachment to the place of his birth.

Scott and Shakespeare.

Another illustration of the same feeling, one common to Scott and Shakespeare, is the prudence and foresight displayed by both in husbanding their gains, in order to provide, amid the scenery they loved, a home for themselves and their families. Shakespeare, however, had an advantage which the other had not—that of being an excellent business man, careful and sharp-sighted, running no such risks and meeting with no such reverses as those which saddened Sir Walter's later days. To Washington Irving the latter declared that if he could not see the gray hills and the heather of Abbotsford once a year, he would die; but it was granted to both to spend their last years in the home which their energy and affection had provided, and to sleep their last long sleep amid the fields and streams that gave light and music to their boyhood. Of all great authors, these two are most habitually thought of in connection with their native haunts and homesteads, and so it was with Shakespeare even in the days when

he lived; for to his contemporaries, as well as to all succeeding generations, he was known as "the swan of Avon." In all Britain there is no ground so completely identified with the noblest energies of genius, so consecrated by life-long associations as the banks of the Tweed and the Avon around Abbotsford and Stratford church. To all lovers of literature, to all whose spirits have been touched to finer issues by its regenerating influence, these spots, and above all the abbey grave and the chancel tomb, are holy ground—national shrines visited by pilgrims from every land, who breathe with pride and gratitude and affection the household names of Shakespeare and of Scott.

Shakespeare's Ancestry.

The name Shakespeare was common in the Midland counties of England two centuries before the poet's birth. In the fifteenth century more than twenty are enumerated as belonging to the guild of St. Anne at Knoll, and from two of these, John and Joan, the great dramatist was probably descended. His grandfather, Richard, occupied a substantial dwelling and cultivated a forest farm at Snitterfield, three or four miles from Stratford, where he lived and died in seeming prosperity. To Richard were born two sons, John and Henry, the former of whom was the father of William Shakespeare. In 1551, discontented with the rustic life at Snitterfield, John removed to Stratford, and there established himself as a trader in one of the principal thoroughfares. A few years later he is described

in the official register as a glover, which at that time included dealing in skins and in various leather-made articles of farming gear, as rough gauntlets and leggings for hedging and ditching, leather gloves for chopping wood, and the like. As his means increased, he also engaged in trade as a butcher, wool-stapler, corn-dealer, and timber-merchant. As Stratford was the centre of a large agricultural and grazing district, and as nearly all his relatives and connections were engaged in farming, he was soon at the head of a thriving business.

John Shakespeare.

John Shakespeare was a man of energy, ambition and public spirit, with the knowledge and ability requisite for pushing his fortune, but with certain defects of character that finally led to failure. Presently we find him taking an active part in public affairs, rising step by step until appointed high-bailiff or mayor of the town. Soon afterward he was married to an heiress of gentle birth, Mary Arden of the Asbie family, who brought him a substantial sum of ready money, with an estate at Wilmcote, and other interests in lands and houses, including Richard Shakespeare's farm at Snitterfield. At this time John is designated as a yeoman, freeholder and gentleman, and has the epithet master affixed to his name, this being equivalent to esquire and used only in relation to men of means and station. The last real property acquired by the mayor was the two houses in Henley street that still remain identified with the name and are consecrated by tradition as the poet's

birthplace, as the Mecca of the thousands who worship at the spot where the great dramatist was born.

But the tide was now on the turn, reverses of fortune following in rapid succession. Soon after settling in the town, John is fined twelve pence for not removing the heap of refuse that had accumulated in front of his door. He is sued for small debts in the bailiff's court, certainly not through lack of means, but, as it seems, from pure negligence. He engaged in too many branches of business; for not content with including the whole list of agricultural products, he also entered into farming on a considerable scale. He was given to free-handed hospitality and fond of pleasurable excitement, as was shown at the time of his mayoralty, when he brought companies of players into the town and gave dramatic performances at the guild hall, thus probably helping to shape his son's career. An increasing family added largely to his expenses, while his official position, combined with his love of good-fellowship, led to much inconsiderate outlay. Piece by piece the estate of John and Mary Shakespeare dwindled away until there was nothing left but the two houses on Henley street, with which he never parted in the darkest hours of his distress. When a tax was levied for military purposes, he was declared a defaulter; a judgment for debt was entered against him, together with an official report that he had no goods on which distraint could be made; he was placed under restraint, and not improbably under arrest; and yet the townsfolk seem, in the main, to have dealt kindly with him. He did not recover from this collapse until the aid of his gifted son

enabled him to hold up his head and take measures for the recovery of his lost position and estate.

During the last few years of the sixteenth century William Shakespeare's success in his profession was fully assured, and he was now on the high road to fame and wealth. As an actor, dramatist, and probably a shareholder in the Blackfriars theatre, he was in receipt of a goodly income, and it was said that he received considerable sums from the young Earl of Southampton, to whom his works were dedicated. Thus he was now as able as he had always been willing to help his father to regain the comfort and dignity to which he had been accustomed. The latter died in 1601, his son's affectionate care permitting him to spend the last years of his life in a manner befitting one who had been a prosperous burgess and mayor of Stratford.

Mary Arden.

Little is known of Mary, mother of William Shakespeare. The oldest and best beloved of the seven daughters of Robert Arden, she was descended from the most ancient of the county families of Warwickshire, its members having more than once filled the posts of high sheriff and lord-lieutenant. Her ancestors are traced back, not only to Norman, but to Anglo-Saxon times, Alwin, an early representative, connected with the royal house of Athelstane, having become sheriff of Warwickshire in the time of Edward the Confessor. On her father's side she was related to Robert Arden, who in the fifteenth century lost his life while

rallying local forces on behalf of the White Rose; on the mother's side to John Hampden, who took so distinguished a part in the civil war between King and Parliament. In the earlier and more prosperous days at Stratford, when all within the home circle was bright and happy, the delightful image of the young mother would melt unconsciously into the boy's mind, fill his imagination, and become a storehouse whence in after years he would draw some of the finest lines in his matchless portraiture of women. In the darker days that followed he would learn something of the vast possibilities of suffering, personal and sympathetic, belonging to a deep and sensitive nature, and as the troubles increased he would gain some insight into the quiet courage and self-possession, the unwearied fortitude, sweetness and dignity which such a nature reveals when stirred to its depths by adversity, and rallying all its resources to meet the inevitable storms of fate. Though genius is without ancestry or lineage, there are elements of character and qualities of mind that, like the features of the countenance and the lines of the bodily frame, seem to be clearly transmissible from parent to child. Shakespeare himself not infrequently recognizes this general truth, and it is chiefly qualities of this kind that he appears to have inherited from his gently born and nurtured mother. It is hardly fanciful to say that in the life and character of the poet we may trace elements of higher feeling and conduct derived from the hereditary culture and courtesy, the social insight and refinement, of the Ardens. Among these elements may be mentioned his strong sense of independ-

ence and self-respect, his delicate feelings of honor, his habitual consideration for others, and his deep instinctive regard for family interests and relationships.

Characteristics.

The two epithets which those who knew Shakespeare best applied to him most frequently embody some of these characteristics. They unite in describing him as gentle and honest in character, and of an open and free, a frank and generous disposition. The term "gentle" may be taken to represent the innate courtesy, the delicate treatment of others, which belongs in marked degree to those of gentle birth, though by no means confined to them. The second epithet, "honest," which in the usage of the time means honorable, may be taken to express the spirit which, while self-respecting and independent, carefully respects the just claims and rights of his fellow-man. One point which, if not inherited from his mother, must have been derived from her teaching and example, is a nice exactness in money matters—the maxim not lightly to incur pecuniary obligations, and if incurred, to meet them with scrupulous precision and punctuality. This he certainly did not learn from his father, who, though an honest man, was too eager and careless to be very particular in money matters. Indeed, carelessness in this respect seems to have been inherent in the family, his uncle as well as his father being often sued for debt. He doubtless took to heart the lesson of the latter's imprudence; for he realized vividly the rock on which his prosperity

had been wrecked, and before he left home had formed a resolution to avoid it at all hazards. Thus may be explained his business industry, financial skill, and steady progress in worldly success. There is nothing more remarkable in Shakespeare's worldly career than the resolute spirit of independence which he seems to have displayed from the moment he left his straitened household to seek his fortune in the great wilderness of London to the time when he returned to live at Stratford as a man of wealth and position in the town. While many of his fellow dramatists were spendthrifts, in constant difficulties, leading disorderly lives, and sinking into unhonored graves, he husbanded his resources with a rare display of self-control. During his earliest and most trying years in London, he not only kept himself clear of debt and difficulty, but established a reputation for strictly honorable conduct, "divers of worship"—that is men in position and authority—"having reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace of writing." Considering the poet's environment, this is significant testimony, and coming as it does from one of his contemporaries by no means well disposed to him, shows that thus early in his career he was held in high repute. While fond of social life and its enjoyments, and without a touch of harshness or severity in his temper, he held himself thoroughly in hand, and amid the ocean of new experiences and desires on which he was suddenly launched, never abandoned the helm, never lost command over his course, never sacrificed the interests of the future to the pleasures of the passing hour. Of all

Shakespeare's gifts, perhaps those which he possessed in the highest degree were common sense and self-control, and in these is the basis of all true genius; for they are gifts unfortunately all too rare among the masses of mankind, and especially among those who dub themselves poets.

Early Environment.

Of the eight children of John and Mary Shakespeare, two of the four daughters died in infancy, before the poet's birth, and a third in early childhood. Three sons, in addition to William, and one daughter, lived to maturity. During his early boyhood the affairs of the family were in a prosperous condition, and he doubtless enjoyed all the pleasures and advantages suitable to his age. Among them was plenty of healthy enjoyment of the outdoor recreations of the age, the sports and pastimes, the recurring spectacles and festivities of the town and neighborhood, especially the celebration in forest farms and villages of the chief incidents of the agricultural seasons. Seed time and harvest, summer and winter, each brought its own group of picturesque merry-makings, including the more important festivals that evoked much rustic pride and enthusiasm. There were at least three of these forest farms where the boy must have spent many a happy day amid the freedom and delights of country life. He would be present at the shearing feasts, and see the queen of the festival receive her rustic guests and distribute among them her floral gifts. At Wilmecote, in the solid oak-timbered dwelling of the Asbies, with its well-stocked garden and

orchard, the boy would be received with cordial hospitality. At Shottery the welcome of the Shakespeares was no less friendly, for the families were known to each other as early as 1566, and here it was that the poet met his future bride, Anne Hathaway, in all the charm of her sunny girlhood, though reaching early womanhood, while he was yet a stripling. In later youth, when care and poverty were ever-present guests at the Stratford household, he passed much of his time at the Hathaway farm; for notwithstanding the disparity of age, Shakespeare was, in intellectual development, far more advanced than his prospective bride.

In these years he frequently made the rounds of this picturesque neighborhood of Arden forest, with the fresh senses and eager feeling, the observant eye and open mind that left every detail imprinted indelibly on his heart and brain. Hence the apt and vivid references to the scenes and scenery of his youth, the intense and penetrating glances at the most vital aspects, as well as the minutest beauties of nature, with which his dramas abound. As the result of such intimate knowledge and enjoyment, he often seems to reveal in a moment, and by a single touch, as it were, all the loveliness and charm of the objects thus rapidly flashed on the inward eye. In relation to the scenes of his youth what fresh and delightful hours at the farms are reflected in the full summer beauty and motley humors of a sheep-shearing festival in the *Winter's Tale*; in the autumn glow of the "sun-burnt sickleman and sedge-crowned nymphs" of the masque in the *Tempest*; and in the vivid pictures of rural sights and sounds so musi-

cally rendered in the owl and cuckoo songs of *Love's Labour's Lost*!

Players at Stratford.

In Stratford the chief holiday entertainments were those connected with the Christmas, New Year, and Easter festivals, the May-day rites and games, the Whitsuntide pageants, and the occasional performance of religious and secular plays. Most of these celebrations involved a dramatic element—some hero or exploit, some emblem or allegory, being represented by means of costumed personations, pantomime, and dumb show, often interspersed with songs, dances and dialogues. There were masques and morris-dancing on May-day, as well as mummers and waits at Christmas, and in many towns and villages the exploits of Robin Hood and his associates were also celebrated on May-day, often amid a picturesque confusion of floral emblems and forestry devices. Whitsuntide was the most important season of festive pageantry and scenic display. In addition to the processions of the guilds and trades and the usual holiday sports and ale-drinking, there was a distinct element of dramatic representation, patronized by the high-bailiff and council, and to this Shakespeare himself refers in a manner which suggests that in youth he may have taken part in them.

In Shakespeare's later boyhood, say between 1573 and 1584, the best theatrical companies in England, among them that of the Earl of Leicester, frequently visited Stratford, and thus he would have the advantage of seeing the finest of existing dramas acted by the best

players of the time. As he watched the performances of various kinds, from interlude to comedy and tragedy, he would gain a valuable insight into the wide scope and vast resources of the nascent drama, and would also have opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of stage business, management, and effects. As his father was so great a friend of the players, and during his prosperous years in constant communication with them, he would have every facility for studying their art. Curiosity and self-interest would prompt him to find out all he could about the use of stage books, the distribution of parts, the cues and exits, the management of voice and gesture, the graduated passion and controlled power of the leading actors, the just subordination of the minor parts, and the measure and finish of each, on which the success of the whole so largely depended. Moreover, it is not improbable that, in connection with some of the companies, Shakespeare may have tried his hand, both as dramatist and actor, before leaving Stratford. His poetical powers could hardly be unknown, and he may have written scenes and passages to fill out an imperfect or complete a defective play, while from his interest in their work he may have been requested by the actors to appear in some secondary part on the stage. In any case, he would become acquainted with some of the leading players in the best companies, so that when he decided to adopt their profession, he might hope to find occupation among them in London without much difficulty or delay; and so indeed he did, though he never attained to any high rank among the brethren of the craft, never was intrusted

with other than minor parts, his best personation being the ghost in his own *Hamlet*.

Education.

The scholastic training, which was the least important part in Shakespeare's education, was received in the grammar school at Stratford. This was one of the endowed schools to be found in all considerable towns, and was on an old foundation, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, and connected with the guild of the Holy Cross. After sharing in the fate of the guild at the suppression of the religious houses, it was restored by Edward VI, and the "King's New School," as now it was called, thus represented the fresh impulse given to education throughout the kingdom by this earnest-minded monarch, well sustained under the enlightened rule of the virgin queen. Latin was the chief scholastic drill, the thorough teaching of the Roman tongue being the purpose for which the grammar schools were originally founded. Greek was hardly introduced into country schools until a later period, but as the language of the learned professions, and still in part of literature, Latin was considered indispensable. Those who completed the course acquired a thorough knowledge of such authors as Ovid and Virgil, Cæsar and Cicero, and if they reached the highest forms, of Plautus and Terence, Horace and Juvenal, together with the tragedies of Seneca. They were also taught to compose and talk in Latin; but except for arithmetic and perhaps a smattering of mathematics,

this was the extent of the curriculum. As Shakespeare remained at least six years at school, and was a youth of exceptional quickness and ability, with more than average industry, he must have received what was then considered a good education, and of this there is sufficient evidence in his writings. Ovid was his special favorite, and the influence of this, the most elegant of Roman poets, is strongly marked and clearly traceable in his poems and earlier plays.

When Shakespeare left school, a year or two before completing the usual course, his education had but just begun; for he was not slow to profit by the greatest of all lessons which school or college can afford, and that was how to educate himself. He became well versed in the best dramatic literature in all languages. He probably acquired some knowledge of French, Italian, and Spanish, though his extensive acquaintance with their drama may have come at second hand; for the best plays of all these nations had been freely rendered into English. That he was a man of vast general information, gathered more from his own observations than from books, need hardly be said, for it appears in every page of his works. He was also skilled in the sciences, and as Pope remarks, "Whatever object of nature or branch of science he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge." Among other instances may be mentioned Cassius' account of the sickness of Cæsar, beginning, "He had a fever when he was in Spain," which has been pronounced by physicians a perfect description of a paroxysm of intermittent fever.

The immediate cause of Shakespeare's withdrawal from school seems to have been the growing embarrassments of his father's affairs, the boy being wanted at home to help in the various departments of his business. He had just entered on his fifteenth year, and his school attainments and turn for affairs, no less than his native energy and ability, fitted him for efficient action in almost any open career. But open careers were not numerous at Stratford, and John Shakespeare's once prosperous way of life was now hampered by actual and threatening difficulties which the zeal and affection of his son were powerless to remove or avert. No doubt the boy did his best, trying to understand his father's position and discharging with prompt alacrity any duties that came to be done. But he would soon discover how hopeless such efforts were, and with this deepening conviction there would come upon him the reaction of weariness and disappointment, which is the true inferno of ardent youthful minds. His father's difficulties were evidently of the chronic and complicated kind against which the generous and impulsive forces of youth and inexperience are of little avail. And, after his son had done his utmost to relieve the sinking fortunes of the family, the aching sense of failure would be among the bitterest experiences of his early years, a sharp awakening, indeed, to the realities and responsibilities of life. Within the narrow circle of his own domestic relationship and dearest interests he would feel with Hamlet that the times were out of joint, and in his gloomier moods be ready to curse the destiny that seemed to lay upon him, in part at least, the burden of setting the

obstinately crooked straight; nor was this an easy task, considering the condition of the family's affairs.

Young Manhood.

As a relief from such moods and a distraction from the fruitless toils of home affairs he would naturally plunge with keener zest into such outlets for youthful energy and adventure as the town and neighborhood afforded. What his actual expectations were during the four years and a half that elapsed between his leaving school and his marriage we have no adequate materials for learning in any detail. But the local traditions on the subject would seem to indicate that after the adverse turn in his fortunes John Shakespeare had considerably contracted the area of his commercial transactions. Having virtually alienated his wife's patrimony by the mortgage of the Asbies and the disposal of all interest in the Snitterfield property, he seems to have given up the agricultural branches of his business, retaining only his original occupation of dealer in leather, skins, and sometimes carcasses as well. His wider speculations had probably turned out ill, and having no longer any land of his own, he apparently relinquished the corn and timber business, restricting himself to the town trades of fellmonger, wool-stapler and butcher. Aubrey, at least, had heard that Shakespeare, after leaving school, assisted his father in these branches; he also reports that for a time the poet was a teacher in a country school, while Malone believed from the internal evidence of his writings that he had spent

two or three years in a lawyer's office. These stories may be taken to indicate what is no doubt true, that at a time of domestic need the poet was ready to turn his hand to anything that offered.

But, however he may have been employed, this interval of home life was for the poet a time of active growth and development, and no kind of business routine could avail to absorb his expanding powers or repress the exuberant vitality of his nature. During these critical years, to his vigorous and healthy mind action of an adventurous and recreative kind must have become an absolute necessity of existence. The necessity was all the more urgent in Shakespeare's case from the narrower circle within which the once-prosperous and expanding home life was now confined. We have seen that he occasionally shared the field sports organized by the country gentlemen, where landlords and tenants, yeomen and squires, animated by kindred sentiment, met to a certain extent on common ground. But this long-drawn pursuit of pleasure as an isolated unit in a local crowd would hardly satisfy the thirst for passionate excitement and personal adventure which is so dominant an impulse in the heyday of youthful blood. It is doubtful, too, whether in the decline of his father's fortunes Shakespeare would have cared to join the ranks of these prosperous local sportsmen. He would probably be thrown a good deal among a somewhat lower, though no doubt energetic and intelligent, class of town companions. And they would devise together exploits which, if somewhat irregular, possessed the charm of freedom and novelty, and would thus be congenial to

an ardent nature with a passionate interest in life and action. Such a nature would eagerly welcome enterprises with a dash of hazard and daring in them, fitted to bring the more resolute virtues into play, and develop in moments of emergency the manly qualities of vigilance and promptitude, courage and endurance, dexterity and skill.

The Deer-stealing Tradition.

It would seem, indeed, at first sight as though a quiet neighborhood like Stratford could afford little scope for such adventures. But even at Stratford there were always the forest and the river, the outlying farms with adjacent parks and manor houses, the wide circle of picturesque towns and villages with their guilds and clubs, their local Shallows and Slenders, Dogberries and Verges; and in the most quiet neighborhoods it still remains true that adventures are to the adventurous. That this dictum was verified in Shakespeare's experience seems clear alike from the internal evidence of his writings and the concurrent testimony of local tradition. In its modern form the story of the Bidford challenge to a beer-drinking contest may indeed be little better than a myth. But in substance it is by no means incredible, and if we knew all about the incident, we should probably find there were other points to be tested between the rival companies besides strength of head to resist the effects of the well-known Bidford ale. The prompt refusal to return with his companions and renew the contest on the following day—a decision play-

fully expressed and emphasized in the well-known doggerel lines—implies that in Shakespeare's view such forms of good-fellowship were to be accepted on social, not self-indulgent grounds, that they were not to be resorted to for the sake of the lower accessories only, or allowed to grow into evil habits from being unduly repeated or prolonged. It is clear that this general principle, announced more than once in his writings, guided his own conduct even in the excitable and impulsive season of youth and early manhood. If he let himself go, as he no doubt sometimes did, it was only as a good rider on coming to the turf gives the horse his head in order to enjoy the exhilaration of a gallop, having the bridle well in hand the while and able to rein in the excited steed at a moment's notice. It may be said of Shakespeare at such seasons, as of his own Prince Hal, that he—

Obscur'd his contemplation
Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
Unseen, yet crecive in his faculty.

The deer-stealing tradition illustrates the same point, and though belonging perhaps to a later period it may be conveniently noticed here. This fragment of Shakespeare's personal history rests on a much surer basis than the Bidford incident, being supported not only by early and multiplied traditions but by evidence which the poet himself has supplied. Rowe's somewhat formal version of the narrative is to the effect that Shakespeare in his youth was guilty of an extravagance which,

though unfortunate at the time, had the happy result of helping to develop his dramatic genius. This misfortune was that of being engaged with some of his companions more than once in robbing a park belonging to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote. Sir Thomas, it is said, prosecuted him sharply for the offense, and in retaliation he wrote a satirical ballad upon him, which so incensed the baronet that Shakespeare thought it prudent to leave Stratford and join his old friends and associates, the players, in London. Other versions exist giving fresh details, some of which are on the face of them later additions of a fictitious and fanciful kind.

Whatever may have been the actual circumstances, there can be no doubt that an element of truth is contained in the deer-stealing tradition. The substantial facts in the story are that Shakespeare in his youth was fond of woodland sports, and that in one of his hunting adventures he came into collision with Sir Thomas Lucy's keepers and fell under the ban of that local potentate. This is indirectly confirmed in his inimitable sketch of the formal country justice—under the name of Robert Shallow—in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and the *Second Part of Henry IV*. To talk of the sketch as an act of revenge is to treat it too seriously, for Shakespeare could hardly be expected to resist the temptation of turning to dramatic account so admirable a subject for humorous portraiture. His fondness for woodland life is supported by numerous allusions to the subject in his earlier plays, as well as in his sonnets. The entire action of *Love's Labour's Lost* takes place in

a royal park, while the scene of the most critical events in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a forest inhabited by outlaws, who, on being pardoned, become the loyal followers of the duke. It seems as though Shakespeare could hardly conceive of a royal palace or capital city without a forest close at hand as the scene of princely sport, criminal intrigue or fairy enchantment. Outside the gates of Athens, swept over hill and dale the wonderful forest which is the scene of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in *Titus Andronicus* imperial Rome seems to be almost surrounded by the brightness and terror, the inspiring charm and sombre shades of rolling forest lawns and ravines, the "ruthless, vast and gloomy woods."

Marriage.

There can be no doubt that much of Shakespeare's life at Stratford was passed in the forest, but in later youth he would be more often found hastening through the fields to Shottery, paying long visits at the Hathaway farm, followed by late and reluctant leavetakings; for the next important fact in his personal history is his marriage with Anne Hathaway. This event took place in the summer of 1582, when he was in his nineteenth year, his bride being seven or eight years older. It has been stated by many of his biographers that the marriage was hasty, unsuitable and unhappy in its results; but of this there is not a particle of evidence. The marriage could not have been a hasty one, for, as we have seen, Shakespeare had known Anne Hathaway from early boyhood. As to its being unhappy, every-

thing goes to show that it was a union of mutual affection and a most fortunate event for the poet himself. His whole course was changed by the new influence, and with his growing responsibilities his character seems to have rapidly matured and his powers to have found fresh and more effective development. His first child, Susanna, was born in May, 1583, and less than two years afterward the family was enlarged by the birth of twins, named Hamnet and Judith after some lifelong friends. Thus, before attaining his majority, the poet had a wife and three children dependent upon him, with little apparent opportunity of advancing his fortunes in Stratford. The situation was a sufficiently serious one, and was further complicated by his father's increasing embarrassments. Four children, the youngest barely five years old, remained to be provided for by John Shakespeare, who was also being constantly sued for debt and in seeming danger of arrest. All this was enough to make a much older man than the poet look anxiously about him; but with the unfailing sense and sagacity which he displayed in practical affairs, he seems to have formed a just and sober estimate of his own powers and made a careful survey of the various fields available for their exercise. As the result he decided in favor of trying the metropolitan stage. He had already tested his ability as an actor on the provincial boards, and once in London, where new pieces were constantly required, he would have full scope for the exercise of his gifts as a dramatist. At the outset he could only expect to find the lower occupation, but at this time, with the growing popular demand for plays,

the actor's calling, though not without social drawbacks, was a lucrative one.

The Stage as a Business.

Greene, in his autobiographical sketch *Never Too Late*, illustrates this point in an account of his early dealings with the players and his experiences as a writer for the stage. Speaking through his hero, Francesco, he says that "when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb he fell in amongst a company of players, who persuaded him to try his wit in writing of comedies, tragedies or pastorals, and if he could perform anything worth the stage, then they would largely reward him for his pains." Succeeding in the work, he was so well paid that he soon became comparatively wealthy. Although writing from the author's rather than the actor's point of view, Greene intimates that the players grew rapidly rich and were entitled both to praise and profit so long as they were "neither covetous nor insolent." In the *Return from Parnassus*, published in 1601, the large sums, fortunes indeed, realized by good actors are referred to as matter of notoriety. One of the disappointed academic scholars, indeed, moralizing on the fact with some bitterness, exclaims—

England affords those glorious vagabonds,
That carried erst their fardles on their backs,
Coursers to ride on through the gazing street,
Sweeping it in their glaring satin suits,
And pages to attend their masterships.
With mouthing words that better wits have framed
They purchase lands, and now esquires are made.

And in a humorous sketch entitled *Ratseis Ghost*, published a few years later, an apparent reference to Shakespeare himself brings out the same point. The hero of the tract, Ratsey, a highwayman, having compelled a set of strolling players to act before him, advised their leader to leave the country and go to London, where, having a good presence for the stage and a turn for the work, he would soon fill his pockets, adding: "When thou feelest thy purse well lined buy thee some place of lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy money may bring thee dignity and reputation." The player, thanking him for his advice, replies: "I have heard, indeed, of some that have gone to London very meanly, who have in time become exceedingly wealthy." The movement to the London stage was, therefore, from a worldly point of view, a prudent one, and for the higher purposes of Shakespeare's life it was equally wise and necessary. For, besides the economic and practical considerations of the step, there must have pressed on the poet's mind the importance of a wider sphere of life and action for the enlargement of his inward horizon, and the effective development of his poetical and dramatic gifts

Early Days in London.

The stories of Shakespeare's first occupations in London are probably founded on fact. He was at first employed in a very humble capacity, snuffing the candles, perhaps, or some other half-menial task. If he did not himself take charge of visitors' horses, he

had in his employ a number of juvenile assistants, engaged for the purpose and known as Shakespeare's boys. In connection with the theatre were open sheds or temporary stables, and each of these boys probably took charge of a horse while its owner was at the play. Thus was supplied a defect in the local arrangements, of which complaints had often been made by mounted gallants. But this was, of course, a brief experience in Shakespeare's early career; for he soon found more congenial occupation in the green room, on the stage, and above all, in the laboratory of his own teeming brain.

Knowledge of French and Italian.

The little leisure that remained to Shakespeare, during his first years in London, was devoted to continuing his education and equipping himself for his future work. It was probably at this time that he acquired the knowledge of French and Italian which his writings suggest; for his acquaintance with the drama of both was so perfect that it can hardly have been derived from translations, though of these he freely availed himself. Among Shakespeare's friends was John Florio, an Italian by birth, who, after completing his education at Oxford, engaged in teaching and literary work in London, associating with eminent men of letters and their noble patrons. After the accession of James I he became tutor to Prince Henry, received a court appointment, and was a personal favorite of Queen Anne. Florio was given to writing eulogistic verse, and in this, at times, Shakespeare assisted him, as appears from in-

ternal evidence, and especially in a sonnet prefixed to Florio's *Second Fruits*, showing all the characteristics of Shakespeare's style. It was probably from him that the poet derived his knowledge of French and Italian, for he taught both languages, and was reputed as the best teacher of the day.

Italian Plots and Incidents.

From Italian sources Shakespeare borrowed the plots and incidents of at least a dozen of his plays. Of these, however, he chose only the healthier materials, leaving to Webster and Ford the more revolting stories of cruelty and lust. Such materials he used, not only for plot and incident, but as a kind of canvas for his matchless portraiture of human character and action. They are also apparent in points of structure and diction, in racial and individual types, and in shades of local coloring, which realize and express in concentrated form the bright and lurid, the brilliant and passionate features of Southern life. The majority of the dramatis personæ in his comedies, as well as in some of his tragedies, have Italian names, and not a few of them, as Mercutio and Gratiano, Iago and Iachimo, are as Italian in nature as in name. The moonlight scene in the *Merchant of Venice* is Italian in every detail, and *Romeo and Juliet*, in coloring, incident and passion, is Italian throughout. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare even appears as a critic of Italian style, as when, in the players' tragedy, the murderer poisons the duke, Hamlet exclaims, "He poisons him in the garden for his estate.

His name's Gonzago; the story is extant and written in very choice Italian." In reading the best translations, he would be increasing his command over the elements of expressive phrase and diction which were the verbal instruments of his art, but he would also desire to possess, and doubtless did possess, the key that would unlock the entire treasure-house of Italian literature. As to Shakespeare's knowledge of French the evidence is so abundant that it need not here be stated.

The London Stage.

It is recorded that, in 1594, Shakespeare was a member of the Chamberlain's company, which performed at the Theatre and Curtain in Shoreditch. In December of that year the company gave a performance before the queen at Greenwich palace, after which the poet's name appears, in company with Richard Burbage and others, among the list of players to be rewarded "for two severall comedies or enterludes showed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme." Among the group of players in the pay of Henslowe at the Newington theatre are Edward Alleyn as leading actor, Marlowe and Greene, Peele and Nash, "and to these we may add an obscure, but useful and worthy fellow, named William Shakespeare." This was Lord Strange's company, by which was performed, in 1591, the first part of Henry VI, as to the authorship of which there was at this time some dispute. The performance was both popular and profitable, ten thousand spectators, as we are told by Nash, witnessing it within a few weeks.

While, during his earlier years in London, Shakespeare acted at several theatres, he was chiefly identified with the Earl of Leicester's players, of whom James Burbage was the head. It was mainly to Burbage, as we have seen, that the earliest London theatres owed their existence, that they were established as a feature of metropolitan life, and that the principal companies were relieved from the stigma of being strolling players, transferring their exhibitions, hitherto given on scaffolds in the court-yards of inns to permanent play-houses. When Shakespeare went to London there were theatres on both sides of the Thames—the outlying houses being chiefly used during the summer and autumn months, while the Blackfriars, roofed in and protected from the weather, was specially used for performances during the winter season. In spite of the persistent opposition of the Lord Mayor and city aldermen, the denunciations of Puritan preachers and their allies in the press, and difficulties arising from intermittent attacks of the plague and the occasional intervention of the court authorities, the theatres had now taken firm root in the metropolis; and, strong in royal favor, in noble patronage, and above all, in popular support, the stage had already begun to assume its higher functions as the living organ of the national voice, the many-colored mirror and reflection of the national life.

A few years later, the companies of players and the theatres they occupied were consolidated and placed on a still firmer basis. For some years past, in addition to the actors really or nominally attached to noble

houses, there had existed a body of twelve performers, selected by royal authority from different companies and known as the Queen's players. The Earl of Leicester's, being the leading company, had naturally furnished a number of recruits to the Queen's players, whose duty it was to act at special seasons before her Majesty and the court. But within a few years after Shakespeare arrived in London the chief groups of actors were divided into two great companies, specially licensed and under the patronage respectively of the lord chamberlain and the lord admiral. Under the new arrangement the Earl of Leicester's actors became the servants of the lord chamberlain. James Burbage had already retired, his place being taken by his more celebrated son Richard, the Garrick of the Elizabethan stage, who acted all the leading parts in Shakespeare's plays.

The Globe and Blackfriars.

In order that the company might have houses of its own, both for summer and winter use, Richard Burbage, his brother Cuthbert, and their associates, including Shakespeare, undertook in 1598 to build a new theatre, not far from the old Paris Garden circus. We know from a subsequent document, which refers incidentally to the building of this theatre, that the Burbages had introduced Shakespeare to the Blackfriars company. He had indeed proved himself so useful, both as actor and poet, that they were evidently glad to secure his future services by giving him a share as part proprietor in the Blackfriars property. The new

theatre now built was the one known as the Globe, already mentioned, and here was for fifteen years, during the summer and autumn months, the popular home of the Shakespearean drama. Three years earlier Richard Burbage and his associates had rebuilt the Blackfriars on a more extended scale; and this well-known house divided with the Globe the honor of producing Shakespeare's later and more important plays. Shakespeare's position, indeed, as actor and dramatist, is identified with these houses and with the Lord Chamberlain's company, to which they belonged. On the accession of James I, this company, being specially favored by the new monarch, received a fresh charter, and its members were thenceforth known as the King's servants.

In the early years of Shakespeare's professional career the national drama had thus a permanent home in theatres conveniently central on either side of the river, and was crowded during the summer and winter months by eager audiences. Even in the best theatres the appliances in the way of scenes and stage machinery were of the simplest description, change of scene being often indicated by the primitive device of a board with the name painted upon it. But players and playwrights, both arts being often combined in the same person, knew their business thoroughly well, and relied for success on the more vital attractions of powerful acting, vigorous writing, and practiced skill in the construction of their pieces. In the presence of strong passions expressed in kindling words, and powerfully realized in living action, gesture and incident, the ab-

sence of canvas sunlight and painted gloom was hardly felt, and the want of more elaborate and realistic scenery was abundantly supplied by the excited fancy, active imagination and concentrated interest of the spectators.

The Elizabethan Drama.

The dramatic conditions of a national theatre were indeed, at the outset of Shakespeare's career, more complete, or rather, in a more advanced state of development, than the playhouses themselves or their stage accessories. If Shakespeare was fortunate in entering on his London work amidst the full tide of awakened patriotism and public spirit, he was equally fortunate in finding ready to his hand the forms of art in which the rich and complex life of the time could be adequately expressed. During the last decades of the sixteenth century the playwright's art had undergone changes so important as to constitute a revolution in the form and spirit of the national drama. For twenty years after the accession of Elizabeth the two roots whence the English drama sprung—the academic or classical, and the popular, developed spontaneously in the line of mysteries, moralities and interludes—continued to exist apart, and to produce their accustomed fruit independently of each other. The popular drama, it is true, becoming more secular and realistic, enlarged its area by collecting materials from all sources—from novels, tales, ballads and histories, as well as from fairy mythology, local superstitions and folk-lore. But these incongruous elements were, for the most part, handled

in a crude and semi-barbarous way, with just sufficient art to satisfy the cravings and clamors of unlettered audiences. The academic plays, on the other hand, were written by scholars for courtly and cultivated circles, were acted at the universities, the inns of court, and at special public ceremonials, and followed, for the most part, the recognized and restricted rules of the classic drama.

But in the third decade of Elizabeth's reign another dramatic school arose, intermediate between the two elder ones, and seeking to combine in a newer and higher form the best elements of both. The main impulse guiding the efforts of the new school may be traced indirectly to a classical source. It was due not immediately to the masterpieces of Greece and Rome, but to the form which classical art had assumed in the contemporary drama of Italy, France and Spain, especially of Italy, which was the one earliest developed and best known to the new school of poets and dramatists. This southern drama, while academic in its leading features, had nevertheless modern elements blended with the ancient form. As the Italian epics, following in the main the older examples, were still charged with romantic and realistic elements unknown to the classical epic, so the Italian drama, constructed on the lines of Seneca and Plautus, blended with the severer form essentially romantic features. With the choice of heroic subjects, the orderly development of the plot, the free use of the chorus, the observance of the unities, and constant substitution of narrative for action, were united the vivid coloring of poetic fancy and diction and the

use of materials and incidents derived from recent history and contemporary life. The influence of the Italian drama on the new school of English playwrights was, however, almost restricted to points of style and diction, of rhetorical and poetical effect. It helped to produce among them the sense of artistic treatment, the conscious effort after higher and more elaborate forms and vehicles of imaginative and passionate expression.

For the rest, the rising English drama, in spite of the efforts made by academic critics to narrow its range and limit its interests, retained and thoroughly vindicated its freedom and independence. The central characteristics of the new school are sufficiently explained by the fact that its leading representatives were all of them scholars and poets, living by their wits and gaining a somewhat precarious livelihood amid the stir and bustle, the temptations and excitement, of London life. The distinctive note of their work is the reflex of their position as academic scholars working under poetic and popular impulses for the public theatres. The new and striking combination in their dramas of elements hitherto wholly separated is but the natural result of their attainments and literary activities. From their university training and knowledge of the ancients they would be familiar with the requirements of dramatic art, the deliberate handling of plot, incident and character, and the due subordination of parts essential for producing the effect of an artistic whole. Their imaginative and emotional sensibility, stimulated by their studies in Southern literature, would naturally prompt them to combine features of poetic beauty and rhetorical finish

with the evolution of character and action; while from the popular native drama they derived the breadth of sympathy, sense of humor and vivid contact with actual life which gave reality and power to their representations.

Greene, Peele and Marlowe.

The leading members of this group or school in relation to the future development of the drama were Greene, Peele and Marlowe. They were almost the first English poets and men of genius who devoted themselves to the production of dramatic pieces for the public theatres, and they all helped to make the plays represented poetical and artistic as well as lively, bustling and popular. Some did this rather from stress of circumstance than from any higher aim or deliberately formed resolve; but Marlowe, the greatest of them, avowed the redemption of the common stage as the settled purpose of his labors at the outset of his dramatic career. And during his brief and stormy life he nobly discharged his self-imposed task. His first play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, struck the note of artistic and romantic tragedy. With all its extravagance and overstraining after vocal and rhetorical effect, the play throbs with true passion and true poetry, and has throughout the stamp of emotional intensity and intellectual power. His later tragedies, while marked by the same features, bring into fuller relief the higher characteristics of his passionate and poetical genius. Alike in the choice of subject and method of treatment Marlowe is thoroughly independent, deriving

little, except in the way of general stimulus, either from the classical or popular drama of his day. The signal and far-reaching reform which he effected in dramatic metre by the introduction of modulated blank verse is one of the strongest evidences of his originality. Gifted with a fine ear for the music of English numbers, and impatient of "the giggling veins of rhyming mother wits," he introduced the noble metre which was at once adopted by his contemporaries and became the vehicle of the great Elizabethan drama. The new metre quickly abolished the rhyming couplets and stanzas that had hitherto prevailed on the popular stage. The rapidity and completeness of this metrical revolution is in itself a powerful tribute to Marlowe's rare insight and feeling as a master of musical expression.

The originality and importance of Marlowe's innovation are not materially affected by the fact that one or two pseudo-classical plays, such as *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta*, had been already written in unrhymed verse. In any case these were private plays, and the monotony of cadence and structure in the verse excludes them from anything like serious comparison with the richness and variety of vocal effect produced by the skillful pauses and musical interlinking of Marlowe's heroic metre. Greene and Peele did almost as much for romantic comedy as Marlowe had done for romantic tragedy. Greene's ease and lightness of touch, his freshness of feeling and play of fancy, his vivid sense of the pathos and beauty of homely scenes and thorough enjoyment of English rural life, give to his dramatic sketches the blended charm of romance and reality

hardly to be found elsewhere except in Shakespeare's early comedies. In special points of lyrical beauty and dramatic portraiture, such as his sketches of pure and devoted women and of witty and amusing clowns, Greene anticipated some of the more delightful and characteristic features of Shakespearean comedy. Peele's lighter pieces and Lyly's prose comedies helped in the same direction. Although not written for the public stage, Lyly's court comedies were very popular, and Shakespeare evidently gained from their light and easy, if somewhat artificial tone, their constant play of witty banter and sparkling repartee, valuable hints for the prose of his own comedies.

Marlowe prepared the way for another characteristic development of Shakespeare's dramatic art. His *Edward II* marks the rise of the historical drama, as distinguished from the older chronicle play, in which the annals of a reign or period were thrown into a series of loose and irregular metrical scenes. Peele's *Edward I*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, and the fine anonymous play of *Edward III*, in which many critics think Shakespeare's hand may be traced, show how thoroughly the new school had felt the rising national pulse and how promptly it responded to the popular demand for the dramatic treatment of history. The greatness of contemporary events had created a new sense of the grandeur and continuity of the nation's life, and excited among all classes a vivid interest in the leading personalities and critical struggles that had marked its progress. There was a strong and general feeling in favor of historical subjects, and especially historical subjects

having in them elements of tragical depth and intensity. Shakespeare's early plays, dealing with the distracted reign of King John, the wars of the Roses, and the tragical lives of Richard II and Richard III, illustrate this bent of popular feeling. The demand, being met by men of poetical and dramatic genius, reacted powerfully on the spirit of the age, helping in turn to illumine and strengthen its loyal and patriotic sympathies.

This is in fact the keynote to the English stage in the great period of its development. It was its breadth of national interest and intensity of tragic power that made the English drama so immeasurably superior to every other contemporary drama in Europe. The Italian drama languished because, though carefully elaborated in point of form, it had no fullness of national life, no common elements of ethical conviction or aspirations, to vitalize and ennoble it. Even tragedy, in the hands of Italian dramatists, had no depth of human passion, no energy of heroic purpose, to give higher meaning and power to its evolution. In Spain the dominant courtly and ecclesiastical influences limited the development of the national drama, while in France it remained from the outset under the artificial restrictions of classical and pseudo-classical traditions. Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries, in elevating the stage and filling it with poetry, music and passion, had attracted to the theatre all classes, including the more cultivated and refined; and the intelligent interest and robust life of so representative an English audience supplied the strongest stimulus to the more perfect development of the great organ of national expression.

The forms of dramatic art, in the three main departments of comedy, tragedy and historical drama, had, as we have seen, become clearly discriminated and evolved in their earlier stages.

Shakespeare's Preëminence.

It was a moment of supreme promise and expectation, and the supreme poet and dramatist appeared to more than fulfill the utmost promise of the time. By right of imperial command over all the resources of imaginative insight and expression Shakespeare combined the rich dramatic materials already prepared into more perfect forms, and carried them to the highest point of ideal development. He quickly surpassed Marlowe in passion, music and intellectual power; Greene in lyrical beauty, elegiac grace and narrative interest; Peele in picturesque touch and pastoral sweetness, and Lyly in bright and sparkling dialogue. And having distanced the utmost efforts of his predecessors and contemporaries he took his own higher way, and reigned to the end without a rival in the new world of supreme dramatic art which he had created. It is a new world, because Shakespeare's works alone can be said to possess the organic strength and infinite variety, the throbbing fullness, vital complexity and breathing truth of nature itself.

In point of artistic resource and technical ability—such as copious and expressive diction, freshness and pregnancy of verbal combination, richly modulated verse and structural skill in the handling of incident

and action—Shakespeare's supremacy is indeed sufficiently assured. But, after all, it is the spirit and substance of his work, his power of piercing to the hidden centres of character, of touching the deepest springs of impulse and passion, out of which are the issues of life, and of evolving those issues dramatically with a flawless strength, subtlety and truth, which raises him so immensely above and beyond not only the best of the playwrights who went before him, but the whole line of illustrious dramatists that came after him. It is Shakespeare's unique distinction that he has an absolute command over all the complexities of thought and feeling that prompt to action and bring out the dividing lines of character. He sweeps with the hand of a master the whole gamut of human experience, from the lowest note to the very top of its compass, from the sportive childish treble of Mamilus and the pleading boyish tones of Prince Arthur up to the spectre-haunted terrors of Macbeth, the tropical passion of Othello, the agonised sense and tortured spirit of Hamlet, the sustained elemental grandeur, the Titanic force and utterly tragical pathos of Lear.

Greene's Jealousy.

As early as 1592 Shakespeare is publicly recognised, not only as an actor of distinction, but as a dramatist whose work had excited the envy and indignation of his contemporaries, and especially of one so accomplished and eminent, so good a scholar and master of the playwright's craft, as Robert Greene. Greene had,

it is true, much of the irritability and excitable temper often found in the subordinate ranks of the poetical fraternity, and he often talks of himself, his doings and associates in a highly-colored and extravagant way. But his reference to Shakespeare is especially deliberate, being in the form of a solemn and last appeal to his friends among the scholarly dramatists to relinquish their connection with the presumptuous and ungrateful stage. In his *Groatsworth of Wit*, published by his friend Chettle a few weeks after his death, Greene urges three of his friends, apparently Marlowe, Lodge and Peele, to give up writing for the players. "Base-minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you like me sought those burs to cleave; those puppets, I mean, who speak from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colors. . . . There is an upstart Crow, beautified in our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and, being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is, in his own conceit, the only Shakescene in the country. Oh, that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions."

This curious passage bears testimony to Shakespeare's assured position and rapid advance in his profession. The very term of reproach applied to him, "Johannes Factotum," is a tribute to his industry and practical ability. From the beginning of his career he

must have been in the widest and best sense a utility man, ready to do any work connected with the theatre and stage, and eminently successful in all he undertook. He had evidently made his mark as an actor, as it is in that character he is referred to by Greene, and denounced for going beyond his province and usurping the functions of the dramatist. Greene's words imply that Shakespeare was not only acknowledged as a good actor, but that he was already distinguished by his dramatic success in revising and rewriting existing plays. This is confirmed by the parodied line—"a tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide"—from the third part of *Henry VI*, revised, if not originally written by Shakespeare, and produced before Greene's death, which took place in September, 1592. Indeed, all the three parts of *Henry VI*, in the revised form, appear to have been acted during the spring and summer of that year. It is not improbable that two or three of Shakespeare's early comedies may also have been produced before Greene's death; and if so, his resentment, as an academic scholar, against the country actor who had not only become a dramatist, but had excelled Greene himself in his chosen field of romantic comedy, becomes intelligible enough. Even in his wrath, however, Greene bears eloquent witness to Shakespeare's diligence, ability and success, both as actor and playwright. Of Shakespeare's amazing industry, and also of his success, there is ample evidence. Within six or seven years he not only produced the brilliant, reflective and descriptive poems of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, but at least fifteen of his dramas, including tragedies, comedies

and historical plays. After finding his true vocation he worked during these years as a master, having full command over the materials and resources of his art. The dramas produced have a fullness of life and a richness of imagery, a sense of joyousness and power, that speak of the writer's exultant absorption and conscious triumph in his chosen work. The sparkling comedies and great historical plays belonging to this period evince the ease and delight of an exuberant mind realizing its matured creations.

England in the Elizabethan Age.

Nor after all is this result surprising. Shakespeare entered on his London career at the very moment best fitted for the full development of his dramatic genius. From the accession of Elizabeth, all the dominant impulses and leading events of her reign had prepared the way for the splendid triumph of policy and arms that closed its third decade, and for the yet more splendid literary triumph of the full-orbed drama that followed. After the gloom and terror of Mary's time, the coming of Elizabeth to the crown was hailed with exultation by the people, and seemed in itself to open a new and brighter page of the nation's history. Elizabeth's personal charms and mental gifts, her high spirit and dauntless courage, her unfailing political tact and judgment, her frank bearing and popular address, combined with her unaffected love for her people and devotion to their interests, awakened the strongest feelings of personal loyalty, and kindled into passionate ardor the spirit of

national pride and patriotism that made the whole kingdom one. The most powerful movements of the age directly tended to reënforce and concentrate these awakened energies. While the Reformation and Renaissance had liberalized men's minds and enlarged their moral horizon, the effect of both was at first of a political and practical rather than of a purely religious or literary kind. The strong and exhilarating sense of civil and religious freedom, realized through the Reformation, was inseparably associated with the exultant spirit of nationality it helped to stimulate and diffuse. The Pope and his emissaries, the Jesuits, were looked upon far more as foreign enemies menacing the independence of the kingdom than as religious foes and firebrands seeking to destroy the newly established faith. The conspiracies, fomented from abroad, that gathered around the captive queen of Scots, the plots successively formed for the assassination of Elizabeth, were regarded as murderous assaults on the nation's life, and the Englishmen who organized them abroad or aided them at home were denounced and prosecuted with pitiless severity as traitors to their country. Protestantism thus came to be largely identified with patriotism, and all the active forces of the kingdom, its rising wealth, energy and intelligence were concentrated to defend the rights of the liberal empire against the assaults of despotic Europe represented by Rome and Spain.

These forces gained volume and impetus as the nation was thrilled by the details of Alva's ruthless butcheries, and the awful massacre of St. Bartholo-

mew, until at length they were organized and hurled with resistless effect against the greatest naval and military armament ever equipped by a Continental power—an armament that had been sent forth with the assurance of victory by the wealthiest, most absolute and most determined monarch of the time. There was a vigorous moral element in that national struggle and triumph. It was the spirit of freedom, of the energies liberated by the revolt from Rome, and illuminated by the fair humanities of Greece and Italy, that nerved the arm of that hardy breed of men in the day of battle, and enabled them to strike with fatal effect against the abettors of despotic rule in church and state. The material results of the victory were at once apparent. England became mistress of the seas, and rose to an assured position in Europe as a political and maritime power of the first order. The literary results at home were equally striking. The whole conflict reacted powerfully on the genius of the race, quickening into life its latent seeds of reflective knowledge and wisdom, of poetical and dramatic art.

Of these effects the rapid growth and development of the national drama was the most brilliant and characteristic. There was indeed at the time a unique stimulus in this direction. The greater number of the eager excited listeners who crowded the rude theatres from floor to roof had shared in the adventurous exploits of the age, while all felt the keenest interest in life and action. And the stage represented with admirable breadth and fidelity the struggling forces, the mingled elements, humorous and tragic, the passionate

hopes, deep-rooted animosities, and fitful misgivings of those eventful years. The spirit of the time had made personal daring an almost universal heritage; with noble and commoner, gentle and simple, alike, love of queen and country was a romantic passion, and heroic self-devotion at the call of either so common as not to excite remark. To act with energy and decision in the face of danger, to strike at once against any odds in the cause of freedom and independence, was the desire and ambition of all. This complete unity of national sentiment and action became the great characteristic of the time. The dangers threatening the newly liberated kingdom were too real and pressing to admit of anything like seriously divided councils, or bitterly hostile parties within the realm. Everything thus conspired to give an extraordinary degree of concentration and brilliancy to the national life. For the twenty years that followed the destruction of the Armada, London was the centre and focus of English life. Here gathered the soldiers and officers who had fought against Spain in the Low Countries, against France in Scotland, and against Rome in Ireland. Along the river-side, and in noble houses about the Strand, were the hardy mariners and adventurous sea captains, such as Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher, who had driven their dauntless keels into unknown seas, who had visited strange lands and alien races in order to enlarge the knowledge, increase the dominions, and augment the wealth of their fellow-countrymen. Here assembled the noble councillors, scholars and cavaliers whose foresight and skill guided the helm of state, whose ac-

complishments in letters and arms gave refinement and distinction to court pageants and ceremonials, and whose patronage and support of the rising drama helped to make the metropolitan theatre the great centre of genius and art, the great school of historical teaching, the great mirror of human nature in all the breadth and emphasis of its interests, convictions and activities.

An Educational Medium.

The theatre was, indeed, the living organ through which all the marvellous and mingled experiences of a time incomparably rich in vital elements found expression. There was no other, or, at least, no organized or adequate means, of popular expression. Books were a solitary entertainment in the hands of the few; newspapers did not exist; and the modern relief of incessant public meetings was, fortunately, perhaps, an unknown luxury. And yet, amid the plenitude of national life centred in London, the need for some common organ of expression was never more urgent or imperious. New and almost inexhaustible springs from the fountains of intellectual life had for years been gradually fertilizing the productive English mind. The heroic life of the past, in clear outline and stately movement, had been revealed in the recovered masterpieces of Greece and Rome. The stores of more recent wisdom and knowledge, discovery and invention, science and art, were poured continually into the literary exchequer of the nation, and widely diffused among eager and open-minded recipients. Under this combined stimulus the

national intellect and imagination had already reacted fruitfully in ways that were full of higher promise. The material results of these newly-awakened energies were, as we have seen, not less signal or momentous.

The number, variety and power of the new forces thus acting on society effected, in a short period, a complete moral revolution. The barriers against the spread of knowledge and the spirit of free inquiry, erected and long maintained by mediæval ignorance and prejudice, were now thrown down. The bonds of feudal authority and Romish domination that had hitherto forcibly repressed the expanding national life were effectually broken. Men opened their eyes upon a new world which it was an absorbing interest and endless delight to explore—a new world physically, where the old geographical limits had melted into the blue atmosphere of distant horizons—a new world morally, where the abolition of alien dogma and priestly rule gave free play to fresh and vigorous social energies; and, above all, more surprising and mysterious than all, they opened their eyes with a strange sense of wonder and exultation on the new world of the emancipated human spirit. At no previous period had the popular curiosity concerning human life and human affairs been so vivid and intense. In an age of deeds so memorable, man naturally became the centre of interest, and the world of human action and passion, character and conduct, was invested with irresistible attraction. All ranks and classes had the keenest desire to penetrate the mysterious depths, explore the unknown regions, and realize as fully as might be the actual achievements and ideal possibilities of the

nature throbbing with so full a pulse within themselves and reflected so powerfully in the world around them. Human nature, released from the oppression and darkness of the Middle Ages, and emerging with all its infinite faculties and latent powers into the radiant light of a secular day, was the new world that excited an admiration more profound and hopes more ardent than any recently-discovered lands beyond the sinking sun. At the critical moment Shakespeare appeared as the Columbus of that new world. Pioneers had, indeed, gone before, and in a measure prepared the way, but Shakespeare still remains the great discoverer, occupying a position of almost lonely grandeur in the sublimity and completeness of his work.

Never before, except perhaps in the Athens of Pericles, had all the elements and conditions of a great national drama met in such perfect union as when the greatest of dramatists began to devote his genius to the theatre. Shakespeare's career as a writer of plays can have differed little in its beginnings from those of his contemporaries and rivals. Before or while he was proceeding from the retouching and rewriting of the plays of others to original dramatic composition, the most gifted of his predecessors had passed away. He had been decried as an actor before he was known as an author; and after living through days of darkness for the theatre, if not for himself, attained, before the close of the sixteenth century, to the beginnings of his prosperity and the beginnings of his fame. But if we call him fortunate, it is not because of such rewards as these. As a poet, Shakespeare was no doubt happy in his times,

which intensified the national character, expanded the national mind, and were able to add their stimulus even to such a creative power as his. He was happy in the antecedents of the form of literature which commended itself to his choice, and in the opportunities which it offered in so many directions for an advance to heights yet undiscovered and unknown. What he actually accomplished, however, was mainly due to his own genius, whose achievements are as vast as itself.

IV.

Shakespeare's Earlier Comedies.

Although it is unnecessary to remind the reader that literary and social standards have greatly changed since Shakespeare's day, it none the less requires a positive mental effort to realize the full significance of so trite a fact. To put ourselves in the place of the people who lived three hundred years ago is by no means as easy a feat as it seems on the surface; yet it must be seriously attempted if we are to get full value out of our reading of the old plays, and not less so when we see them acted.

Social Characteristics.

Mental culture is one thing and manners another. The Elizabethans showed us to what heights the inspirations of genius, or, as some prefer to call it, the cultivation of talent, can soar. Yet we affect to blush at what we label the coarseness of their talk and behavior. Modern society has gradually imposed upon itself certain minor codes of conduct which, by the multiplicity of their superficial trivialities, do much to obscure the vital principles which remain few and simple. We are

in some danger of forgetting that external polish does not change an inferior quality of leather into the best.

Queen Elizabeth was a philosophical, scholarly, clear-headed woman, with a taste for the beautiful and a breadth of view that betokened the quality of greatness, but nothing is more certain than that she would never have been admitted into the polite society of our time; except, it should be said, by the moneyed circles that toady to every type of vulgar, eccentric and notorious character whose wealth or flashy posings have been a nine days' wonder. That royal lady slapped her courtiers on the face; she swore a good round oath on occasion, and breakfasted on hot roast beef washed down with copious libations from a tankard of old ale. This was the time-honored usage of the period, and would no more be tolerated among us than would the dreary inanities of modern fashionable life have been endured by the men of Armada times.

The artificial polish which puts an end to everything like free original communication, and subjects all intercourse to the insipid uniformity of certain rules, was wholly unknown to the age of Shakespeare. It possessed, on the other hand, a fullness of healthy vigor, which showed itself always with boldness, and sometimes also with petulance. The spirit of chivalry was not yet wholly extinct, and a queen who was far more jealous in exacting homage to her sex than to her throne, and who, with her determination, wisdom and magnanimity, was, in fact, well qualified to inspire the minds of her subjects with an ardent enthusiasm, inflamed that spirit to the noblest love of glory and re-

known. The feudal independence also still survived in some measure; the nobility vied with each other in splendor of dress and number of retinue, and every great lord had a small court of his own. The distinction of ranks was as yet strongly marked; a state of things greatly in favor of the dramatic poet. In conversation people of fashion took pleasure in quick and unexpected answers, and the witty sally passed rapidly round from mouth to mouth. This, and the fondness for play on words, which King James shared, may doubtless now be considered as instances of poor taste, but should not, therefore, be taken as evidence of rudeness and barbarity. These strained repartees are frequently employed by Shakespeare, with the view of painting the society of his day, although he held them in derision. Thus Hamlet says to the gravedigger, "By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe." And Lorenzo, in the *Merchant of Venice*, alluding to Launcelot:

O, dear discretion, how his words are sulted!
 The fool hath planted in his memory
 An army of good words: and I do know
 A many fools, that stand in better place,
 Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word
 Defy the matter.

Bluntness of Speech.

Shakespeare repeatedly lays great and marked stress on a correct and refined tone of society, and lashes every

deviation from it, whether of boorishness or affected foppery; not only does he give admirable discourses on it, but he represents it in all its shades and modifications by rank, age or sex. What foundation is there, then, for the alleged barbarity of his age? Its offenses against propriety? But if this is to be admitted as a test, then the ages of Pericles and Augustus must also be described as rude and uncultivated, for Aristophanes and Horace, who both were considered as models of urbanity, display at times the coarsest indelicacy. In this particular the diversity in the moral feeling of ages depends on other causes. Shakespeare, it is true, sometimes introduces us to improper company; at others he suffers ambiguous expressions to escape in the presence of women, and even from women themselves. He certainly did not indulge in this merely to please the multitude, for in many of his pieces there is not the slightest trace of this sort to be found, and in what virgin purity are many of his female characters worked out! When we see the liberties taken by other dramatic poets in England in his time, and even much later, we must account him comparatively chaste and moral. Neither must we overlook certain circumstances in the existing state of the theatre. The female parts, as we have seen, were not acted by women, but by boys, and none of the fair sex appeared in the theatre without masks. Thus disguised, much might be heard by them, and much might be ventured to be said in their presence which under other circumstances would have been absolutely improper.

It is certainly to be wished that decency should be

observed on all public occasions, and especially on the stage; but even in this it is possible to go too far. The prudishness which scents out impurity in every bold sally is, at best, but an ambiguous criterion of purity of morals, and beneath this hypocritical guise there often lurks the consciousness of an impure imagination. The determination to tolerate nothing which has the least reference to the sensual relation between the sexes may be carried to a pitch extremely oppressive to a dramatic poet and highly prejudicial to the boldness and freedom of his compositions. If such considerations were to rule, many of the happiest parts of Shakespeare's plays, for example, in *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*, which, nevertheless, are handled with a due regard to decency, must be set aside as sinning against this affected propriety. In the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus, in those of Wycherley and Congreve, in the works of Swift and Rabelais, there is ten times as much coarseness as in the plays of Shakespeare.

Had no other monument of the age of Elizabeth come down to us than the works of Shakespeare, we should from them alone have formed the most favorable idea of its social culture and enlightenment. When those who see nothing in these plays but rudeness and barbarity cannot deny such arguments as have been put forward they are usually driven to this last resource, and demand: "What has Shakespeare to do with the mental culture of his age? He had no share in it. Born in an inferior rank, ignorant and uneducated, he passed his life in low society and labored to please a vulgar

audience for his bread, without ever dreaming of fame or posterity.”¹

Shakespeare's Social Standing.

In this there is not a single word of truth, though it has been a thousand times repeated. It is true that we know very little of his life, and what we do know consists in part of somewhat doubtful anecdotes, hardly more reliable than those which are told at inns to inquisitive strangers who visit the birthplace or neighborhood of any celebrated man. Within a comparatively recent period some original documents have been brought to light, and among them his will, which, as will presently appear, gives us a peep into his family concerns.

At first a humble player, and then a writer, the poetical fame which in the progress of his career he afterward acquired greatly contributed to ennoble the stage, and to bring the player's profession into better repute. Even at a very early age he endeavored to distinguish himself as a poet in other walks than those of the stage, as is proved by his juvenile poems of *Adonis* and *Lucrece*. He quickly rose to be a shareholder and also manager of the theatre for which he wrote, and he was admitted to the society of persons of distinction. He found a liberal and kind patron in the earl of Southampton, the friend of the unfortunate Essex. His pieces were not only the delight of the public, but also in great favor at court; the two monarchs under whose reigns he wrote were, according to reliable testimony, greatly pleased with him. Many were acted at court, and Elizabeth

appears herself to have commanded the writing of more than one to be acted at her court festivals. King James, it is well known, honored Shakespeare so far as to write to him with his own hand. This is very unlike either contempt or banishment into the obscurity of a low circle. By his labors as a poet, player and stage-manager, Shakespeare acquired a considerable property, which, in the last years of his too short life, he enjoyed in his native town in retirement and in the society of a beloved daughter. Immediately after his death a monument was erected over his grave, which may be considered sumptuous for those times.

In the midst of such brilliant success, and with such distinguished proofs of respect and honor from his contemporaries, it would be singular, indeed, if Shakespeare, notwithstanding the modesty of a great mind, should never have dreamed of posthumous fame. As a profound thinker he had pretty accurately taken the measure of the circle of human capabilities, and he could say to himself with confidence that many of his productions would not easily be surpassed. What foundation, then, is there for the contrary assertion, which would degrade the immortal artist to the situation of a daily laborer for a rude multitude? Merely this, that he himself published no edition of his entire works. We do not reflect that a poet, always accustomed to labor immediately for the stage, who has often enjoyed the triumph of overpowering assembled crowds of spectators, and drawing from them the most tumultuous applause, who the while was not dependent on the caprice of crotchety stage-directors, but left to his own discretion to select and de-

termine the mode of theatrical representation, naturally cares much less for the closet of the solitary reader. During the first formation of a national theatre, more especially, we find frequent examples of such indifference. Of the almost innumerable pieces of Llopé de Vega, many undoubtedly were never printed, and are consequently lost; and Cervantes did not print his earlier dramas, though he certainly boasts of them as meritorious works. As Shakespeare, on retiring from the theatre, left his manuscripts behind with his fellow-managers, he may have relied on theatrical tradition for handing them down to posterity, which would, indeed, have been sufficient for that purpose if the closing of the theatres, under the tyrannical intolerance of the Puritans, had not interrupted the natural order of things. We know, besides, that the poets of that time used to sell the exclusive copyright of their pieces to the theatre; it is therefore not improbable that the right of property in his unprinted pieces was no longer vested in Shakespeare, or had not at least yet reverted to him. His fellow-managers entered on the publication seven years after his death, as it would appear, on their own account and for their own advantage.

Classification of the Plays.

To group the plays of Shakespeare in classes is better than by dates. Certain critics have contended that all Shakespeare's works belong substantially to the same species, although sometimes one ingredient, sometimes another—the invention of the wonderful or the imita-

tion of the real, the pathetic or the comic, seriousness or irony—may preponderate in the mixture. Shakespeare himself, it would appear, did but laugh at the petty endeavors of critics to find out divisions and subdivisions of species, and to hedge in what had been so separated with the most anxious care; thus the pedantic Polonius in *Hamlet* commends the players for their knowledge of “tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, scene undividable or poem unlimited.” On another occasion he ridicules the limitation of tragedy to an unfortunate catastrophe:

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein, doth kill himself.

However, the division into comedies, tragedies and historical dramas, according to the usual practice, may in the main be adopted, if we do not lose sight of the transitions and affinities. The subjects of the comedies are usually romantic love tales; none are altogether confined to the sphere of common or domestic relations; all possess poetical ornament; some run into the marvellous or the pathetic. With these, two of the most famous tragedies are connected by an immediate link, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, both true romances, and composed on the same principles. In many of the historical plays a considerable space is occupied by comic characters and scenes; others are serious throughout, and leave behind a tragical impression. The essential circumstance by which they are distinguished is that the plot bears reference to a poetical and national interest.

This is not equally the case in *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Macbeth*, and therefore we do not include these tragedies among the historical pieces, though the first is founded on an ancient Norse legend; the second on a national tradition, and the third comes within the limits of Scottish history, after it ceases to be fabulous.

Shakespearean Comedy.

Shakespeare's comedy is by no means restricted to the plays which fall under this head. It is intermingled with the grandest of his tragic scenes, as in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and interwoven with the serious parts where romantic fables or historic events are made the subject of a noble and elevating exhibition. But he does not therefore intend, in defiance of his better judgment, to humor the tastes of the multitude; for in various pieces, and especially when the catastrophe is approaching, and the mind more on the stretch and no longer likely to give heed to diversion, he has abstained from all such comic intermixtures. It was also an object with him that the clowns or buffoons should not occupy a more important place than he had assigned them, and he expressly condemns the extemporizing with which they loved to enlarge their parts. Johnson justifies the species of drama in which seriousness and mirth are mixed by the fact that in real life the vulgar is found close to the sublime, that the mirthful and the sad usually accompany or succeed one another. But it does not follow that because both are found together they must therefore not be separable in the composi-

tions of art, and the mixture of such dissimilar and apparently contradictory ingredients in the same works can only be justifiable on principles reconcilable with the views of art. In the dramas of Shakespeare the comic scenes are the antechamber of the poetry, where the servants remain; these prosaic attendants must not raise their voices so high as to deafen the speakers in the presence-chamber; nevertheless, in those intervals when the ideal society has retired, they deserve to be listened to; their bold raillery, their presumption of mockery, may afford many an insight into the situation and circumstances of their masters.

Shakespeare's comic talent is no less wonderful than that which he has shown in the pathetic and tragic; it stands on an equal elevation, and possesses equal extent and profundity. He is even more inventive in comic situation and motives; for it will be hardly possible to show whence he has taken any of them, whereas, in his serious dramas, he has usually laid hold of some well-known story. His comic characterization is just as true, various and profound as his serious. So little is he disposed to caricature, that rather, it may be said, many of his traits are almost too nice and delicate for the stage, that they can only be made available by a great actor, and fully understood by an audience of exceptional culture and intelligence. Not only has he delineated many kinds of folly, but even of sheer stupidity has he contrived to give a most diverting and entertaining picture. There is also in his plays a peculiar species of the farcical, which apparently seems to be introduced more arbitrarily, but which is founded on im-

itation of some actual custom. This is the introduction of the merry-maker, the fool with his cap and bells, and motley dress, called more commonly in England clown. He appears in several comedies, but among the tragedies in *Lear* alone, and, as a rule, merely exercises his wit in conversation with the principal persons, though sometime incorporated into the action. In these days it was not only usual for princes to have their court fools, but many distinguished families kept such a housemate as an antidote against the insipidity and weariness of ordinary life, and a welcome interruption of established formalities. Great statesmen and even ecclesiastics did not consider it beneath their dignity to recruit and solace themselves after important business with the conversation of their fools, and the celebrated Sir Thomas More had his fool painted along with himself by Holbein. Shakespeare appears to have lived immediately before the time when the custom began to be abolished; for in the English comic authors who succeeded him the clown is no longer to be found. The dismissal of the fool has been extolled as a proof of refinement, and our honest forefathers have been pitied for taking delight in such a coarse and farcical amusement. Yet we are rather disposed to believe that the practice was dropped from the difficulty of finding fools able to do justice to their parts. In *Twelfth Night* Viola says:

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of wit;
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of the persons, and the time;

And like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labor as a wise man's art:
For folly that he wisely shows is fit,
But wise men's folly fall'n taints their wit.

On the other hand, reason, with all its conceit of itself, has become too timid to tolerate such bold irony; it is always careful lest the mantle of its gravity should be disturbed in any of its folds; and rather than allow a privileged place to folly beside itself, it has unconsciously assumed the part of the ridiculous; but, alas, a heavy and cheerless ridicule. It would be easy to make a collection of the excellent sallies and biting sarcasms which have been preserved of celebrated court fools. It is well known that they frequently told such truths to princes as are never now told to them. Shakespeare's fools, along with somewhat of an overstraining for wit, which cannot altogether be avoided when wit becomes a separate profession, have for the most part an incomparable humor, and a great abundance of intellect, enough, indeed, to supply a host of ordinary wise men.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

The earlier comedies include *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors*. The first named depicts the irresolution of love, and its infidelity to friendship, pleasantly, yet with something of the levity of mind which a passion suddenly entertained, and as suddenly given up, presupposes. The faithless lover is at last, on account of a

very ambiguous repentance, forgiven without much difficulty by his first mistress; for the more serious part, the premeditated flight of the daughter of a prince, the capture of her father along with herself by a band of robbers, of which one of the Two Gentlemen, the betrayed and banished friend, has been against his will elected captain—for all this a peaceful solution is found. It is as if the course of the world was obliged to accommodate itself to a transient youthful caprice, called love. Julia, who accompanies her faithless lover in the disguise of a page, is, as it were, a light sketch of the tender female figures of a Viola and an Imogen, who, in other plays of Shakespeare, leave their homes in similar disguise on love adventures, and to whom a peculiar charm is communicated by the display of the most maidenly modesty in their hazardous and problematical situation. This play has been severely criticised; Coleridge pronounces it a mere sketch, and there is no necessity to make it a greater work than it is.

The Comedy of Errors.

The Comedy of Errors is founded on the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, but entirely recast and enriched with new developments; of all the works of Shakespeare this is the only example of imitation or borrowing from the ancients. To the two twin brothers of the same name are added two slaves, also twins, impossible to be distinguished from each other, and of the same name. The improbability becomes by this means doubled; but when once we have lent ourselves to the first, which

certainly borders on the incredible, we shall not perhaps be disposed to cavil at the second; and if the spectator is to be entertained by mere perplexities they cannot be too much varied. In such pieces we may, to give to the senses at least an appearance of truth, suppose that the parts by which the misunderstandings are occasioned are played with masks, and this the poet perhaps intended. It has been objected by some critics that the discovery is too long deferred; but while novelty and interest are possessed by the perplexing incidents, there is no need to be in dread of weariness. And this is really the case here; matters are carried so far that one of the two brothers is first arrested for debt, then confined as a lunatic, and the other is forced to take refuge in a sanctuary to save his life. In a subject of this description it is impossible to steer clear altogether of the farcical element, of abusive language and blows; Shakespeare has, however, endeavored to ennoble the play. Two scenes dedicated to jealousy and love interrupt the course of perplexities which are solely occasioned by the illusion of the external senses. A greater solemnity is given to the discovery, from the prince presiding, and from the reunion of the long separated parents of the twins.

The two Dromios are not so distinctly marked in their points of difference as the Antipholus twins. Each has his merry jests; each can take a thrashing with wonderful good temper; witness the apostrophe on the virtues of beating: "When I am cold he heats me with beating; when I am warm he cools me with beating; I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with it when I sit;

driven out of doors with it when I go from home; welcomed home with it when I return." The Dromio of Ephesus is precise and antithetical, striving to utter his jests with becoming gravity, and approaching a pun with a solemnity that is often diverting:

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit;
The clock has stricken twelve upon the bell;
My mistress made it one upon my cheek;
She is so hot, because the meat is cold.

On the contrary, the jests of Dromio of Syracuse are the outpourings of a merry heart. He is a creature of prodigious animal spirits, running over with fun and queer similitudes. He makes not the slightest attempt at arranging a joke, but utters what comes uppermost with irrepressible volubility. He is an untutored wit, but doubtless made his lengthy descriptions endurable to his master. What a prodigality of wit, for instance, is displayed in his description of the bailiff, and again of the kitchen-maid, coarse, indeed, in parts, but irresistibly droll. Both the Dromios are admirable in their way, but he of Syracuse is far superior to his brother of Ephesus.

Love's Labour's Lost.

A very popular play in Shakespeare's time was his *Love's Labour's Lost*, or, as it is entitled in the first edition of 1598, "a pleasaunte-conceyted comedie, called *Love His Labour Lost*, as it was presented before her Highness this last Christmas, newly corrected and augmented." The piece is a humorous display of

frolie; a whole cornucopia of the most vivacious jokes is emptied into it. That it was written in Shakespeare's youth is perceivable in the lavish superfluity of labor in the execution; the unbroken succession of plays on words, and sallies of every description, hardly leave the spectators time to breathe; the sparkles of wit fly about in such profusion that they resemble a blaze of fireworks, while the dialogue, for the most part, is in the same hurried style in which the passing masks at a carnival attempt to banter each other. The young king of Navarre, with three of his courtiers, has made a vow to pass three years in rigid retirement and devote them to the study of wisdom; for that purpose he has banished all female society from his court and imposed a penalty on intercourse with women.

But no sooner has he, in a pompous harangue, worthy of the most heroic achievements, announced this determination when the daughter of the king of France appears at his court, in the name of her old and bedridden father, to demand the restitution of a province which he held in pledge. Compelled to give her audience, he falls immediately in love with her. Matters fare no better with his companions, who on their parts renew an old acquaintance with the princess' attendants. Each in heart is already false to his vow, without knowing that the wish is shared by his associates; they overhear one another, as they in turn confide their sorrows in a love-ditty to the solitary forest; everyone jeers and confounds the one who follows him. Biron, who from the beginning was the most satirical among them, at last steps forth and rallies the king and the two others,

till the discovery of a love-letter forces him also to hang down his head. He extricates himself and his companions from their dilemma by ridiculing the folly of the broken vow, and, after a noble eulogy on women, invites them to swear new allegiance to the colors of love. This scene is inimitable, and the crowning beauty of the whole.

The manner in which the men afterward prosecute their love-suits in masks and disguises, and in which they are tricked and laughed at by the ladies, who are also masked and disguised, is, perhaps, spun out too long. It may be thought, too, that the poet, when he suddenly announces the death of the king of France, and makes the princess postpone her answer to the young prince's serious advances till the expiration of the period of her mourning, and imposes, besides, a heavy penance on him for his levity, is outside the sphere of comedy. But the tone of raillery, which prevails throughout the piece, made it hardly possible to bring about a more satisfactory conclusion; after such extravagance, the characters could not return to sobriety, except under the presence of some foreign influence. The grotesque figures of Don Armado, a pompous, fantastic Spaniard, a couple of pedants and a clown, who between whiles contributes to the entertainment, are the creation of a whimsical imagination, and well adapted as foils for the wit of so vivacious a society.

Charles Lamb used to speak of *Love's Labour's Lost* as the "Comedy of Leisure," and certain it is that in the commonwealth of King Ferdinand of Navarre all the men are idle, and the women, also. The courtiers in

their pursuit of "that angel knowledge" waste their time in subtle contentions how that angel is to be won; the ladies from France keep up their round of jokes with Boyet, "the wit's peddler," and everybody is merry in idleness. The settlement of affairs between France and Navarre is deferred until morrow, and whether Aquitaine goes back to France or the hundred thousand crowns return to Navarre we never learn. The king and his courtiers then forswear their studies, and every man becomes a lover and a sonneteer. The refined traveller from Spain resigns himself to his passion for the dairy-maid; the schoolmaster and the curate talk learnedly after dinner, and at last the king, the nobles, the priest, the pedant, the braggart, the page and the clown join in one dance of mummary, in which they all laugh and are laughed at.

All's Well That Ends Well.

All's Well That Ends Well is the old story of a young maiden whose love looked much higher than her station. She obtains her lover in marriage from the hand of the king as a reward for curing him of a hopeless and lingering disease by means of an hereditary arcanum of her father's, who had been in his lifetime a celebrated physician. The young man despises her virtue and beauty; concludes the marriage only in appearance, and seeks in the dangers of war deliverance from a domestic entanglement which wounds his pride. By faithful endurance and an innocent fraud she fulfills the apparently impossible conditions on which the count had promised to acknowledge her as his wife. Love appears

here in humble guise; the wooing is on the woman's side; it is striving, unaided by a reciprocal inclination, to overcome the prejudices of birth. But as soon as Helena is united to the count by a sacred bond, though by him considered an oppressive chain, her error becomes her virtue. She affects us by her patient suffering; the moment in which she appears to most advantage is when she accuses herself as the persecutor of her inflexible husband, and, under the pretext of a pilgrimage to atone for her error, privately leaves the house of her mother-in-law.

Johnson expresses a cordial aversion for Count Bertram, and regrets that he should be allowed to escape at last with no other punishment than a temporary shame, nay, even be rewarded with the unmerited possession of a virtuous wife. But has Shakespeare ever attempted to soften the impression made by his unfeeling pride and perversity? He has but given him the good qualities of a soldier. And does not the poet paint the true way of the world, which never makes much of man's injustice to woman, if so-called family honor is preserved? Bertram's sole justification is that, by the exercise of arbitrary power, the king thought proper to constrain him in a matter of such delicacy and private right as the choice of a wife. Besides, this story, as well as that of Grissel and many similar ones, is intended to prove that woman's truth and patience will at last triumph over man's abuse of his superior power, while other novels and fabliaux are, on the other hand, satires on woman's inconstancy and cunning. In this piece old age is painted with rare favor: the plain hon-

esty of the king, the good-natured impetuosity of old Lafeu, the maternal indulgence of the countess to Helena's passion for her son, seem all as it were to vie with each other in endeavors to overcome the arrogance of the young count. The style of the whole is more sententious than imaginative, for the glowing colors of fancy could not with propriety have been employed on such a subject. In the passages where the humiliating rejection of the poor Helena is most painfully affecting, the cowardly Parolles steps in to the relief of the spectator. The mystification by which his pretended valor and his shameless slanders are unmasked must be ranked among the most comic scenes that ever were invented; they contain matter enough for an excellent comedy, if Shakespeare were not always rich even to profusion. Falstaff has thrown Parolles into the shade, otherwise among the poet's comic characters he would have been still more famous.

By Coleridge the play has been described as the counterpart of *Love's Labour's Lost*. The labor of love which is lost is not a very earnest labor. The king and his courtiers would win their mistress by "bootless rhymes and speeches penn'd," and thus their most sincere declarations are only received as "mocking merriment." The concluding speeches of the ladies to their lovers show clearly that Shakespeare intended to explain the reason why their labor was lost—it was labor hastily taken up, pursued in a light temper, and assuming the character of "pleasant jest and courtesy." But the princess and her ladies would not be thus lightly won. They would not accept fine speeches as labor without

a year's probation. What would naturally be the counterpoise of such a story? One of passionate, enduring, all-pervading love, a love that shrinks from no difficulty, resents no unkindness, fears no disgrace, but perseveres, under the most adverse circumstances, to vindicate its own claims by its own energy, and to achieve success by the strength of its own will. This is the labor of love which is won, and this is the story of *All's Well That Ends Well*.

When Helena, in the first scene, describes the hopelessness of her love—

It were all one
That I should love a bright, particular star
And think to wed it, he is so far above me.

She does not expect to come within his sphere without some extraordinary effort, and she proposes to make that effort:

My project may deceive me,
But my intents are fix'd and will not leave me.

Very beautifully does Shakespeare relieve us from the feeling that it is unsexual for the task to be undertaken by Helena, and very delicately does he make her hold to her determination, even while she confesses to the countess the secret of her love:

My friends were poor but honest; so's my love;
Be not offended; for it hurts not him
That he is loved of me; I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit;
Nor would I have him till I do deserve him.

Her feelings amount almost to agony when Bertram refuses her, and even then she abandons only for a moment her fixed intent:

That you are well restor'd, my lord, I'm glad;
Let the rest go.

After the marriage and the desertion her constancy is still incessantly tasked. Love now assumes the aspect of duty. "What more commands he? In everything I wait upon his will," is all the reply she makes to the harsh dictates of her lord, conveyed by a frivolous messenger. In her parting interview with Bertram, in which he hardly attempts to conceal his coldness and dislike, the same spirit is displayed. But a still harder trial awaits her. Her lord announces his final abandonment of her, except on conditions seemingly impossible, but her intense love has destroyed all feeling of self.

Poor lord! is't I
That chase thee from thy country, and expose
Those tender limbs of thine to the event
Of the non-sparing war?

Presently we find her in Florence, after which the plot is such as Shakespeare could only have found in the legendary history of an age preserved from oblivion by a genius kindred to his own.

A critic has well remarked: "All the circumstances and details with which Helena is surrounded are shocking to our feelings and wounding to our delicacy, and yet the beauty of her character is made to triumph over

all. To be tremblingly alive to gentle impressions, and yet be able to preserve, when the prosecution of her design requires it, an immovable heart amidst even the most imperious causes of subduing emotion is, perhaps, not impossible, but it is one of the rarest endowments of humanity."

Bertram is a puzzle to those who look without tolerance on human motives and actions, and from a one-sided view he has no redeeming qualities. "I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram," says Johnson, "a man noble without generosity and young without truth; who marries Helena as a coward and leaves her as a profligate; when she is dead by his unkindness sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness." But without his defects the dramatic action could not have proceeded; without his merits the dramatic sentiment could not have been maintained. From the first Shakespeare had made us understand that the pride of birth in Bertram constrained him to regard Helena as greatly his inferior, and when the king proposes her to him as a wife, he assigns only one reason for rejecting her; but that is all in all:

I know her well;
She had her breeding at my father's charge;
A poor physician's daughter my wife!

If Bertram could have seen Helena with the eyes of his mother, as

A maid too virtuous
For the contempt of empire——

or with those of the king and of Lafeu, he would not have rejected her, and the comedy would have been merely a common love-tale. As to his failings, all Shakespeare's tolerance is put forth to make us understand that Bertram is not isolated in his vices, and that they are not alone to be regarded in our estimates of character. "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together; our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not, and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues." It is in this spirit that Shakespeare undoubtedly intended we should judge Bertram.

Parolles is exactly what he is described by Helena:

I know him a notorious liar,
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward.

To the insults of Lafeu he has nothing to oppose—neither wit nor courage—and his very impudence is overborne. All this is but a preparation for the comic scenes in which his folly, his falsehood and his cowardice combine to make him odious and ridiculous. The very meanness of his nature is his safeguard, and after his detection the consolations of his philosophy are most characteristic:

Yet am I thankful, if my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this; captain I'll be no more;
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall; simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart
Let him fear this; for it will come to pass
That every braggart shall be found an ass,

Rust sword! cool blushes! and Parolles, live
Safest in shame! being fool'd by foolery, thrive!
There's place and means for every man alive.

The Merchant of Venice.

The Merchant of Venice is one of Shakespeare's most perfect works; popular to an extraordinary degree, and calculated to produce the most powerful effect on the stage, and at the same time a wonder of ingenuity and art for the reflecting critic. Shylock, the Jew, is one of the inimitable masterpieces of characterization, which are to be found only in Shakespeare. It is comparatively easy for both poet and player to exhibit a caricature of national sentiments, modes of speaking and gestures; but Shylock is anything but a commonplace Jew; he possesses a strongly-marked and original individuality, though we perceive a light touch of Judaism in everything he says or does. In tranquil moments all that is foreign to the European blood and Christian sentiments is less perceptible, but in passion the national stamp comes out more strongly marked. All these inimitable niceties the finished art of a great actor can alone properly express. Shylock is a man of information; in his own way even a thinker; but he has not discovered the region where human feelings dwell; his morality is founded on disbelief in goodness and magnanimity. The desire to avenge the wrongs and indignities heaped upon his nation is, after avarice, his strongest spring of action.

The hate of Shylock is naturally directed chiefly

against those Christians who are actuated by truly Christian sentiments; a disinterested love of our neighbor seems to him the most unrelenting persecution of the Jews. The letter of the law is his idol; he refuses to lend an ear to the voice of mercy, which, from the mouth of Portia, speaks to him with heavenly eloquence; he insists on rigid and inflexible justice, and at last it recoils on his own head. Thus he becomes a symbol of the general history of his unfortunate nation. The melancholy and self-sacrificing magnanimity of Antonio is affectingly sublime. Like a princely merchant, he is surrounded with a whole train of noble friends, and the contrast which this forms to the selfish cruelty of the usurer was necessary to redeem the honor of human nature. The danger which, almost to the close of the fourth act, hangs over Antonio, and which the imagination is almost afraid to approach, would fill the mind with too painful anxiety, if the poet did not also provide for its recreation and diversion. This is effected in an especial manner by the scenes at Portia's country-seat, which transport the spectator into quite another world. And yet they are closely connected with the main business by the chain of cause and effect; Bassanio's preparations for his courtship are the cause of Antonio's subscribing to the dangerous bond, and Portia again, by the counsel and advice of her uncle, a famous lawyer, effects the safety of her lover's friend.

But the relations of the dramatic composition are admirably observed in yet another respect. The trial between Shylock and Antonio is, indeed, recorded as being a real event; still it must ever remain an unheard-of

and singular case. Shakespeare has therefore associated it with a love intrigue not less extraordinary; the one consequently is rendered natural by means of the other. A rich, beautiful and clever heiress, who can only be won by solving the riddle of the locked caskets, and the foreign princes, who come to try the venture—all this powerfully excites the imagination with the splendor of an olden tale of marvels. The two scenes in which, first the prince of Morocco, in the language of Eastern hyperbole, and then the self-conceited prince of Arragon, make their choice among the caskets, serve merely to raise our curiosity and give employment to our wits; but on the third, where the two lovers stand trembling before the inevitable choice, which in one moment must unite or separate them forever, Shakespeare has lavished all the charms of feeling, all the magic of poesy. We share in the rapture of Portia and Bassanio at the fortunate choice; we easily conceive why they are so fond of each other, for they are both most deserving of love.

The judgment scene, with which the fourth act is occupied, is in itself a perfect drama, concentrating in itself the interest of the whole. The knot is now untied, and, according to the common ideas of theatrical satisfaction, the curtain ought to drop. But the poet was unwilling to dismiss his audience with the gloomy impressions which Antonio's acquittal, effected with so much difficulty and contrary to all expectations, and the condemnation of Shylock were calculated to leave behind them; he has therefore added the fifth act by way of a musical afterlude in the piece itself. The episode of Jessica, the fugitive daughter of the Jew, in whom

Shakespeare has contrived to throw a veil of sweetness over the national features, and the artifice by which Portia and her companion are enabled to rally their newly-married husbands, supply him with the necessary materials. The scene opens with a playful prattling of two lovers in a summer evening; it is followed by soft music, and a rapturous eulogy on this powerful disposer of the human mind and the world; the principal characters then make their appearance, and after a simulated quarrel, which is gracefully maintained, the whole ends with the most exhilarating mirth.

Antonio is one of the most beautiful of Shakespeare's characters. He does not take a very prominent part in the drama; he is a sufferer rather than an actor. We view him, in the outset, rich, liberal, surrounded with friends; yet he is unhappy. He has higher aspirations than those which ordinarily belong to one dependent upon the chances of commerce; and this uncertainty, as we think, produces his unhappiness. He will not acknowledge the forebodings of evil which come across his mind. Ulrici says: "It was the over-great magnitude of his earthly riches, which, although his heart was by no means dependent upon their amount, unconsciously confined the free flight of his soul." It is doubtful whether Shakespeare meant this. He has addressed the reproof of that state of mind to Portia, from the lips of Nerissa:

Portia.—By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is a-weary of this great world.

Nerissa.—You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and

yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing.

Antonio may say:

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad;

but his reasoning denial of the cause of his sadness is a proof to us that the foreboding of losses—

Enough to press a royal merchant down,

is at the bottom of his sadness. It appears to us a self-delusion, which his secret nature rejects, when he says:

My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore, my merchandise makes me not sad.

When he has given the fatal bond, he has a sort of desperate confidence, which looks very unlike assured belief:

Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it;
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

And, finally, when his calamity has become a real fact, and not a shadowy notion, his deportment shows that his mind has been long familiar with images of ruin:

Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;

For herein fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use,
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view, with hollow eye and wrinkled brow,
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.

The generosity of Antonio's nature unfitted him for
a contest with the circumstances amid which his lot was
cast. The Jew says:

In low simplicity,
He lends out money gratis.

He himself says:

I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me.

Bassanio describes him as

The kindest man,
The best condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies.

To such a spirit, whose "means are in supposition"—
whose ventures are "squander'd abroad"—the curse of
the Jew must sometimes have presented itself to his
own prophetic mind:

This is the fool that lends out money gratis.

Antonio and his position are not in harmony. But
there is something else discordant in Antonio's mind.
This kind friend, this generous benefactor, this gentle

spirit, this man "unwearied in doing courtesies," can outrage and insult a fellow-creature, because he is of another creed:

Shylock.—Fair, sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much monies.

Antonio.—I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too.

Was it without an object that Shakespeare made this man, so entitled to command our affections and our sympathy, act so unworthy a part, and not be ashamed of the act? Most assuredly the poet did not intend to justify the indignities which were heaped upon Shylock, for in the very strongest way he has made the Jew remember the insult in the progress of his revenge:

Thou call'dst me dog, before thou hadst a cause:
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs.

Antonio is as much to be pitied for his prejudices as the Jew for his. They had both been nurtured in evil opinions. They had both been surrounded by influences which, more or less, held in subjection their better natures. The honored Christian is as intolerent as the despised Jew. The one habitually pursues with injustice the subjected man that he has been taught to loathe; the other, in the depths of his subtle obstinacy, seizes upon the occasion to destroy the powerful man that he has been compelled to fear. The companions of Antonio exhibit, more or less, the same reflection of

the prejudices which have become to them a second nature. They are not so gross in their prejudices as Launcelot, to whom "the Jew is the very devil incarnate;" but to Lorenzo, who is about to marry his daughter, Shylock is a "faithless Jew." When the unhappy father is bereft of all that constituted the solace of his home, and before he has manifested that spirit of revenge which might well call for indignation and contempt, he is to the gentlemanly Solanio "the villain Jew," and "the dog Jew." When the unhappy man speaks of his daughter's flight, he is met with a brutal jest on the part of Salarino, who, within his own circle, is the pleasantest of men—"I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal." Note the more delicate traits of character that lie beneath the two great passions of the Jew's heart. Look, for example, at the extraordinary mixture of the personal and the national in his dislike of Antonio. He hates him for his gentle manners:—

How like a fawning publican he looks!

He hates him, "for he is a Christian"—he hates him, for that "he lends out money gratis"—but he hates him more than all, because

He hates our sacred nation.

It is this national feeling which, when carried in a right direction, makes a patriot and a hero, that assumes in Shylock the aspect of a grovelling and fierce personal revenge. He has borne insult and injury "with

a patient shrug;" but ever in small matters he has been seeking retribution:—

I am not bid for love; they flatter me;
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian.

The mask is at length thrown off—he has the Christian in his power, and his desire of revenge, mean and ferocious as it is, rises into sublimity, through the unconquerable energy of the oppressed man's willfulness. "I am a Jew; hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? and, if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that." He has properly cast the greater portion of the odium which belongs to his actions upon the social circumstances by which he has been hunted into madness. He has been made the thing he is by society. In the extreme wildness of his anger, when he utters the imprecation—"I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my feet, and the ducats in her coffin," the tenderness that belongs to our common humanity, even in its most passionate forgetfulness of the dearest ties, comes across him in the remembrance of the mother of that execrated child:—"Out upon her! Thou torturest me,

Tubal; it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor."

In the conduct of the trial scene is to be sought the concentration of Shakespeare's leading ideas in the composition of this drama. The merchant stands before the Jew a better and a wiser man than when he called him "dog:"—

I do oppose

My patience to his fury; and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Misfortune has corrected the influences which, in happier moments, allowed him to forget the gentleness of his nature, and to hear unmerited abuse upon him whose badge was sufferance. The Jew is unchanged. But, if Shakespeare in the early scenes made us entertain some compassion for his wrongs, he has now left him to bear all the indignation which we ought to feel against one "incapable of pity." But we cannot despise the Jew. His intellectual vigor rises supreme over the mere reasonings by which he is opposed. He defends his own injustice by the example of as great an injustice of every-day occurrence—and no one ventures to answer him:—

You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them:—Shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer,

The slaves are ours:—So do I answer you.
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine, and I will have it:
If you deny me, fie upon your law!

It would have been exceedingly difficult for the merchant to have escaped from the power of the obdurate man, so strong in the letter of the law, and so resolute to carry it out by the example of his judges in other matters, had not the law been found here, as in most other cases, capable of being bent to the will of its administrators. Had it been the inflexible thing which Shylock required it to be, a greater injustice would have been committed than the Jew had finally himself to suffer. Very truthfully has Mrs. Jameson described the struggle which Portia had to sustain in abandoning the high ground taken in her great address to the Jew:—"She maintains at first a calm self-command, as one sure of carrying her point in the end; yet the painful heart-thrilling uncertainty in which she keeps the whole court, until suspense verges upon agony, is not contrived for effect merely; it is necessary and inevitable. She has two objects in view; to deliver her husband's friend, and to maintain her husband's honor by the discharge of his debt, though paid out of her own wealth ten times over. It is evident that she would rather owe the safety of Antonio to anything rather than the legal quibble with which her cousin Bellario has armed her, and which she reserves as a last resource. Thus all the speeches addressed to Shylock, in the first instance, are either direct or indirect experiments on his temper and feelings. She must be understood, from the beginning

to the end, as examining with intense anxiety the effect of her own words on his mind and countenance; as watching for that relenting spirit which she hopes to awaken either by reason or persuasion."

Had Shylock relented after that most beautiful appeal to his mercy, which Shakespeare has here placed as the exponent of the higher principle upon which all law and right are essentially dependent, the real moral of the drama would have been destroyed. The weight of injuries transmitted to Shylock from his forefathers, and still heaped upon him even by the best of those by whom he was surrounded, was not so easily to become light, and to cease to exasperate his nature. Nor would it have been a true picture of society in the sixteenth century had the poet shown the judges of the Jew wholly magnanimous in granting him the mercy which he denied to the Christian. We certainly do not agree with the duke, in his address to Shylock, that the conditions upon which his life is spared are imposed—

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit.

Nor do we think that Shakespeare meant to hold up these conditions as anything better than examples of the mode in which the strong are accustomed to deal with the weak. There is still something discordant in this, the real catastrophe of the drama. It could not be otherwise, and yet be true to nature.

But how artistically has the poet restored the balance of pleasurable sensations! Throughout the whole conduct of the play, what may be called its tragic portion, has been relieved by the romance which belongs

to the personal fate of Portia. But, after the great business of the drama is wound up, we fall back upon a repose which is truly refreshing and harmonious. From the lips of Lorenzo and Jessica, as they sit in the "paler day" of an Italian moon, are breathed the lighter strains of the most playful poetry, mingled with the highest flights of the most elevated. Music and the odors of sweet flowers are around them. Happiness is in their hearts. Their thoughts are lifted by the beauties of the earth above the earth. This delicious scene belongs to what is universal and eternal, and takes us far away from these bitter strifes of our social state which are essentially narrow and temporary. And then come the affectionate welcomes, the pretty, pouting contests, and the happy explanations of Portia and Nerissa with Bassanio and Gratiano. Here, again, we are removed into a sphere where the calamities of fortune, and the injustice of man warring against man, may be forgotten. The poor merchant is once more happy; but the "gentle spirit" of Portia is perhaps the happiest, for she has triumphantly concluded a work as religious as her pretended pilgrimage "by holy crosses."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

A Midsummer Night's Dream and *The Tempest* may be so far compared that in both the influence of a wonderful world of spirits is interwoven with the turmoil of human passions and with the farcical adventures of folly. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is certainly an early production; but *The Tempest*, according to all

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.
After an original painting by P. Gerzais

*Come sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thine amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.*

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.—SHAKESPEARE.



appearance, was written in Shakespeare's later days. Hence, most critics, on the supposition that the poet must have continued to improve with increasing maturity of mind, have honored the latter piece with a marked preference. The internal merit of the two works are, however, about evenly balanced, and a predilection for the one or the other is a matter of personal taste. In profound and original characterization the superiority of *The Tempest* is obvious: as a whole we must always admire the masterly skill which he has here displayed in the economy of his means, and the dexterity with which he has disguised his preparations—the scaffoldings for the wonderful aerial structure.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, on the other hand, there flows a luxuriant vein of the noblest and most fantastical invention; the most extraordinary combination of very dissimilar ingredients seems to have been brought about without effort by some ingenious and lucky accident, and the colors are of such clear transparency that we think the whole of the variegated fabric may be blown away with a breath. The fairy world here described resembles those elegant pieces of arabesque, where little genii with butterfly wings rise, half embodied, above the flower-cups. Twilight, moonshine, dew and spring perfumes are the element of these tender spirits; they assist nature in embroidering her carpet with green leaves, many-colored flowers and glittering insects; in the human world they do but make sport childishly and waywardly with their beneficent or noxious influences. Their most violent rage dissolves in good-natured raillery; their passions,

stripped of all earthly matter, are merely an ideal dream. To correspond with this, the love of mortals is painted as a poetical enchantment which, by a contrary enchantment, may be immediately suspended and then renewed again. The different parts of the plot; the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, Oberon and Titania's quarrel, the flight of the two pair of lovers, and the theatrical manœuvres of the mechanics, are so lightly and happily interwoven that they seem necessary to each other for the formation of a whole.

Oberon is desirous of relieving the lovers from their perplexities, but greatly adds to them through the mistake of his minister, till he at last comes really to the aid of their fruitless amorous pain, their inconstancy and jealousy, and restores fidelity to its old rights. The extremes of fanciful and vulgar are united when the enchanted Titania awakes and falls in love with a coarse mechanic with an ass's head, who represents, or rather disfigures, the part of a tragical lover. The droll wonder of Bottom's transformation is merely the translation of a metaphor in its literal sense; but in his behavior during the tender homage of the Fairy Queen we have an amusing proof how much the consciousness of such a head-dress heightens the effect of his usual folly. Theseus and Hippolyta are, as it were, a splendid frame for the picture; they take no part in the action, but surround it with a stately pomp. The discourse of the hero and his Amazon, as they course through the forest with their noisy hunting-train, works upon the imagination like the fresh breath of morning, before which the shapes of night disappear. *Pyramus and Thisbe* is not

unmeaningly chosen as the grotesque play within the play; it is exactly like the pathetic part of the piece, a secret meeting of two lovers in the forest, and their separation by an unfortunate accident, and closes the whole with the most amusing parody.

"I am convinced," says Coleridge, "that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout." The poet, in fact, says so in express words:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this (and all is mended),
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.

But to understand this dream—to have all its gay and soft and harmonious colors impressed upon the vision, to hear all the golden cadences of its poesy, to feel the perfect congruity of all its parts, and thus to receive it as a truth, we must not suppose that it will enter the mind amidst the lethargic slumbers of the imagination. We must receive it

As youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.

No one need expect that the beautiful influences of this drama can be truly felt when he is under the subjection of the literal and prosaic parts of our nature; or, if he habitually refuses to believe that there are

higher and purer regions of thought than are supplied by the physical realities of the world. If so, he will have a false standard by which to judge of this, and of all other high poetry—such a standard as that of the acute and learned critic, Dr. Johnson, who lived in a prosaic age, and fostered in this particular the ignorance by which he was surrounded. He cannot himself appreciate the merits of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: “Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts in their various modes are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies, in his time, were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser’s poem had made them great.” And thus old Pepys, with his honest hatred of poetry: “To the King’s theatre, where we saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.”

Hallam accounts *A Midsummer Night's Dream* poetical more than dramatic; “yet rather so, because the indescribable profusion of imaginative poetry in this play overpowers our senses, till we can hardly observe anything else, than from any deficiency of dramatic excellence. For, in reality, the structure of the fable, consisting as it does of three, if not four, actions, very distinct in their subjects and personages, yet wrought into each other without effort or confusion, displays the skill, or rather instinctive felicity, of Shakespeare, as much as in any play he has written.”

Hazlitt has thus described its failure as an acting drama in his own day: “*A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. All that is finest in the play is lost in the representation. The spectacle is grand, but the spirit has evaporated, the genius has fled. Poetry and the stage do not agree well together. The attempt to reconcile them in this instance fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The ideal can have no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective; everything there is in the foreground. That which was merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. Where all is left to the imagination, as is the case in reading, every circumstance, near or remote, has an equal chance of being kept in mind; but the imagination cannot sufficiently qualify the actual impressions of the senses. Any offense given to the eye is not to be got rid of by explanation. Thus Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells; on the stage it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate moonshine."

The Taming of the Shrew.

The Taming of the Shrew has the air of an Italian comedy; and, indeed, the love intrigue, which constitutes the main part of it, is derived from a play of Ariosto. The characters and passions are lightly sketched; the intrigue is introduced without much preparation, and in its rapid progress impeded by no diffi-

culties; while, in the manner in which Petruchio, though previously cautioned as to Katherine, still encounters the risks in marrying her and contrives to tame her, the character and peculiar humor of the English are distinctly visible. The colors are laid on somewhat coarsely, but the ground is good. That the obstinacy of a young and untamed girl, possessed of none of the attractions of her sex, and neither supported by bodily nor mental strength, must soon yield to the rougher and more capricious but assumed self-will of a man; such a lesson can be taught on the stage with all the perspicuity of a proverb.

The prelude is more remarkable than the play itself—a drunken tinker, removed in his sleep to a palace, where he is deceived into the belief that he is a nobleman. The invention, however, is not Shakespeare's. Holberg has handled the same subject in a masterly manner, and with inimitable truth; but he has spun it out to five acts, for which such material is hardly sufficient. He probably took the hint from a popular story, for there are several comic motives of this description, which go back to a very remote age, without ever becoming antiquated. Here, as usual, Shakespeare has proved himself a great poet; the whole is merely a slight sketch, but in elegance and delicate propriety it can hardly be excelled. Neither has he overlooked the irony which the subject naturally suggested; the great lord, who is driven by idleness and ennui to deceive a poor drunkard, can make no better use of his situation than the latter, who every moment relapses into his vulgar habits.

The play was first published in 1598, as a "wittie and

pleasaunte comedie," called the *Taminge of the Shrewe*, later editions in 1607-8 showing many alterations. By some critics it is held that Shakespeare had little to do with any of the scenes in which Katherine and Petruchio are not engaged. It is, indeed, altogether probable that the comedy is a version of another and earlier play called the *Taming of a Shrew*, acted some four years earlier. There is a prelude to both, and in both the incidents are the same, except that in the earlier piece Sly, the drunkard, remains throughout the performance, and is finally carried back to the ale-house door in a condition of sleep. Yet this old-time favorite of the comic stage, as included among the works of the great dramatist, bears the true Shakespearean stamp, and as certainly belongs to him as anything that bears his name.

This was an age when such taming as Katherine received was not considered as barbarous. Men were tamed by the axe and the fagot; children by the rod and the schoolmaster's ferrule, and husbands thought that the taming of women, after the fashion of Petruchio, by oaths and starvation, was altogether commendable. Such discipline as that which subdued "Kate the curst" was considered necessary more than a century later, when we find in the *Tatler* a story of a gentleman with a daughter so imperious in temper that she could only be reclaimed by the Petruchio recipe of "taking a woman down in her wedding shoes." Now that Petruchian methods are no longer considered orthodox, we are none the less indebted to him who has exhibited with so much spirit the secrets of the taming school, for has not Shakespeare found "a soul of goodness in things evil?"

Has he not taught us the real secret of conquering opposition?

Your gentleness shall force,
More than your force move us to gentleness.

There may be some, especially among women, who feel a sense of indignation when Petruchio exclaims in triumph:

He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Now let him speak.

But it is to the plays of Shakespeare, more than to any other human agency, that woman owes the elevation of the feminine character by his matchless delineations of its purity, its faith, its disinterestedness, its tenderness, its heroism, its union of intellect and sensibility. Nowhere else shall we find such ideal elevation of womanhood as in the ingenuous and trusting Imogen, the guileless Perdita, the impassioned Juliet, the heart-stricken but loving Desdemona, the generous and courageous Portia, the unconquerable Isabella, the playful Rosalind, the world-unknowing Miranda?

If Shakespeare requires any apology for *The Taming of the Shrew*, it is for having adopted the subject at all, and not for the treatment of it. The temper of his shrew is the result of her pride and love of domination. She is captious to her father; she tyrannizes over her younger sister; she is jealous of the attractions of that sister's gentleness. This is a temper that could not be subdued by kindness, or at least could not be so subdued except by a long course of patient discipline, quite

incompatible with the hurried movement of dramatic action. It is in her worst mood that Petruchio woos her; and certainly he does it with sufficient assurance, for with his imperturbable spirit and his daring mixture of reality and jest he subdues her at the first interview:

Setting all this chat aside,
Thus in plain terms:—Your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on;
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.

Katherine denounces him as

A madcap ruffian and a swearing Jack.

But this Petruchio heeds not:

We have 'greed so well together,
That upon Sunday is the wedding-day.

Katherine rejoins:

I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.

Nevertheless, the betrothment proceeds, and is accepted by Katherine, as is shown, when, on the appointed day, Petruchio has not appeared:

Now must the world point at poor Katherine,
And say—Lo! there is mad Petruchio's wife,
If it would please him come and marry her.

Her pride is touched in the right direction; the taming is already begun; presently Petruchio arrives. The scene in the church is in Shakespeare's happiest style.

As to the character of Petruchio, Hazlitt justly observes: "He is a madman in his senses; a very honest fellow, who speaks hardly a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character to the life, with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untired animal spirits, and without a particle of ill humor from beginning to end."

The Merry Wives of Windsor.

The first edition of this play, in which are continued the comic parts of Henry IV, was published in 1602; but the comedy, as now it stands, first appeared in the folio of 1623, with nearly twice the number of lines. Between the two editions there is, indeed, little in common, save that the succession of scenes is, with one exception, the same. The speeches in the later copy are greatly elaborated and improved, as also are the characters, to which new and distinctive features are given. The Slender, for example, of the folio is one of the best of Shakespeare's minor characters, while in the earlier version it is a very inferior conception, being worked up from the first rough sketch with touches as delicate as they are powerful. Again, the Justice Shallow of the first copy has lost many of the characteristics which identify him with the Shallow of Henry IV, all of which are reproduced in the folio. The inferiority of the edition of 1602 may in part be accounted for by the fact that the play, as then published, was written in fourteen days, by order of Queen Elizabeth, who de-

sired Falstaff to be exhibited as in love, since all the pleasantry he could afford in any other situation had been exhausted. In love, properly speaking, Falstaff could not be; but for other purposes he could pretend to be so, or at all events imagine that he was the object of love. In the present piece, accordingly, he pays his court, as a favored knight, to two married ladies, who lay their heads together and agree to listen apparently to his addresses, for the sake of making him the butt of their ridicule. The whole plan of the intrigue is therefore derived from the ordinary circle of comedy, but yet richly and artificially interwoven with another love affair. The circumstance which has been so much admired in Molière's *School of Women*, that a jealous individual should be made the confidant of his rival's progress, had previously been introduced into *The Merry Wives*, and certainly with much more probability. It was not, however, the original invention of Shakespeare; it is one of those circumstances which must almost be considered as part of the common stock of comedy, and everything depends on the delicacy and humor with which it is used. That Falstaff should fall so repeatedly into the snare, gives us a less favorable opinion of his shrewdness than his antecedents had led us to form; still, it will not be thought remarkable, if once we admit the probability of the first infatuation, on which the whole piece is founded—that he believes himself qualified to inspire a passion. This leads him, notwithstanding his age, his corpulency, and his dislike of personal inconveniences and dangers, to venture on an enterprise which requires the boldness and activity of youth; and

the situations occasioned by this infatuation are droll beyond all description.

Of all Shakespeare's plays, this approaches the nearest to the species of pure comedy; it is exclusively confined to the English manners of the day, and to the domestic relations. But it was a point of principle with Shakespeare to make none of his compositions a mere imitation of the prosaic world, and thus to strip them of all poetical decoration; accordingly, he has elevated the conclusion by a wonderful intermixture. A popular superstition is made the means of a fanciful mystification of Falstaff. Disguised as the ghost of a hunter who, with ragged horns, wanders about the woods of Windsor, he is to wait for his frolicsome mistress; in this plight he is surprised by a chorus of boys and girls disguised as fairies, who, agreeably to the popular belief, are holding their midnight dances, and who sing a merry song as they pinch and torture him. This is the last affront put upon poor Falstaff, and with this contrivance the conclusion of the second love affair is made in a most ingenious manner to depend.

The critics have been singularly well disposed toward this comedy. Wharton calls it "the most complete specimen of Shakespeare's comic powers." Johnson says, "This comedy is remarkable for the variety and number of its personages, who exhibit more characters appropriated and discriminated than perhaps can be found in any other play." Schlegel is of opinion that it is Shakespeare's nearest approach to pure comedy, untinctured with tragedy or romance. Yet, of those qualities which put Shakespeare above all other men,

The Merry Wives exhibits few traces. Some touches, indeed, such as no other hand could give, there are in Slender, and perhaps in Quickly, as where the former says, "If I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God;" and of Quickly, "His worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way. The boy never need to understand anything, for it's not good that children should know any wickedness."

The principal action of this comedy—the adventures of Falstaff with the merry wives—sweeps on with a rapidity of movement which hurries us forward to the dénouement. No reverses, no disgraces, can save Falstaff from his final humiliation. The net is around him, but he does not see the meshes; he fancies himself the deceiver, but he is the deceived. He will stare Ford "out of his wits," he will "awe him with his cudgel;" yet he lives "to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal; and to be thrown in the Thames." But his confidence is undaunted: "I will be thrown into Etna, as I have been thrown into Thames, ere I will leave her;" yet, "since I plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, I knew not what it was to be beaten, till lately." Lastly, he will rush upon a third adventure: "This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers;" yet his good luck ends in "I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass." The real jealousy of Ford most skillfully helps on the merry devices of his wife; and with equal skill does the poet make him throw away his jealousy and assist in the last plot against the "unclean knight." The misadventures of

Falstaff are most agreeably varied. The disguise of the old woman of Brentford puts him altogether in a different situation to his suffocation in the buck-basket, and the fairy machinery of Herne's Oak carries the catastrophe out of the region of comedy into that of romance. And to the sphere of romance the *Merry Wives* certainly in part belongs, though it is not the high-flown romance of the middle ages—the armored knights and beauteous damsels of which the German school loved so well to write.

The movement of the principal action is beautifully contrasted with the occasional repose of the other scenes. The Windsor of the time of Elizabeth is presented to us as a quiet country town sleeping under the shadow of its neighbor, the castle. Amidst its gabled houses, separated by pretty gardens, from which the elm and the chestnut and the lime throw their branches across the unpaved road, we find a goodly company, with little to do but gossip and laugh and make sport out of each other's cholers and weaknesses. We see Master Page training his "fallow greyhound," and we go with Master Ford "a-birding." We listen to the "pribbles and prabbles" of Sir Hugh Evans and Justice Shallow with a quiet satisfaction; for they talk as unartificial men ordinarily talk, without much wisdom, but with good temper and sincerity. We find ourselves in the days of ancient hospitality, when men could make their fellows welcome without ostentatious display, and half a dozen neighbors "could drink down all unkindness" over "a hot venison pasty." The more busy inhabitants of the town have time to tattle and to

laugh and be laughed at. It is a charming picture of merry England in the olden times, and sets us longing for even a passing touch of its simple life.

Much Ado About Nothing.

The main plot in *Much Ado About Nothing* is the same as the story of *Ariodante and Ginevra* in Ariosto; but the secondary circumstances and development are very different. The mode in which the innocent Hero before the altar at the moment of the wedding, and in the presence of her family and many witnesses, is put to shame by a most degrading charge, false indeed, yet clothed with every appearance of truth, is a grand piece of theatrical effect in the true and justifiable sense. The impression would have been too tragical had not Shakespeare carefully softened it in order to prepare for a fortunate catastrophe. The discovery of the plot against Hero has been already partly made, though not by the persons interested; and the poet has contrived, by means of the blundering simplicity of a couple of constables and watchmen, to convert the arrest and examination of the guilty individuals into scenes full of the most delightful amusement. There is also a second piece of theatrical effect not inferior to the first, where Claudio, now convinced of his error, and in obedience to the penance laid on his fault, thinking to give his hand to a relation of his injured bride, whom he supposes dead, discovers on her unmasking, Hero herself. The extraordinary success of this play in Shakespeare's own time, and long afterward, is, however, to be

ascribed more particularly to the parts of Benedick and Beatrice, two fun-loving cynics, who incessantly attack each other with all the resources of raillery. Avowed rebels to love, they are both entangled in its net by a merry plot of their friends to make them believe that each is the object of the secret passion of the other. Objection has been made to the same artifice being twice used in entrapping them; the drollery, however, lies in the very symmetry of the deception. Their friends attribute the whole effect to their own device; but the exclusive direction of their raillery against each other is in itself a proof of a growing inclination. Their wit and vivacity does not even abandon them in the avowal of love; and their behavior only assumes a serious appearance for the purpose of defending the slandered Hero. This is exceedingly well imagined; the lovers of jesting must fix a point beyond which they are not to indulge their humor, if they would not be mistaken for buffoons by trade.

Much Ado About Nothing was first printed and acted in 1600, this edition not being divided into acts, as in the folio. The variations in the text are, however, extremely light, the folio being evidently printed from the playhouse copy. Ariosto had made of this story a tale of chivalry; Spenser, in his *Faerie Queene*, a lesson of high and solemn morality; Bandello an interesting love-romance. It remained for Shakespeare to surround the main incidents with those accessories which he could nowhere borrow, and to make of it such a comedy as no other man had made—a comedy not of manners or of sentiment, but of life viewed under its

profoundest aspects, whether of the grave or the ludicrous.

This play was also acted under the title of *Benedick and Beatrice*; for these characters absorb most of the acting interest. But they cannot be separated from it without being liable to misconstruction. The character of Beatrice cannot be properly understood, except in connection with the injuries done to Hero, and it is in this relation that she appears in her real character and no longer under a mask. The poet Campbell has pronounced her "an odious woman;" for she is not at heart what at first she seems to be—a jesting, jibing, sarcastic young woman, one who has no faith in valor, and is not minded to be subdued by courtesy; who prefers a "skirmish of wit" to "making account of her life to a clod of wayward marl." This is not the real Beatrice, who is in fact a high-spirited, imaginative girl, one who, with all her wit, has an abundance of womanly sensibility, and is by no means in a gay humor when she says, "I may sit in a corner and cry heigh ho! for a husband." While seated in

The bleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter,

without any outburst of passion she hears her cousin say of her—

Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly that to her
All matter else seems weak; she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.

And why is she so calm under this bitter reproach? Why does she show no resentment against her cousin for this cruel representation? It is because she knows she has been playfully wearing a mask to hide the real strength of her sympathies. But now,

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

She is no longer a thing of mere negations, a fashionable, brilliant woman of the world. It is hard to believe that it is the same Beatrice we encounter, who, when her cousin's wedding "looks not like a nuptial," and poor innocent Hero is deserted by lover and father, alone has the courage to say—

Oh! on my soul, my cousin is belied!

It is the injury done to Hero which wrings from Beatrice the avowal of her love for Benedick, and it is surely no reproach to her that she would have her lover peril his life against the false accuser of her cousin. She has thrown off her maidenly disguise, and the earnestness of her soul will now have vent. The conventional Beatrice is now the actual Beatrice, and the same process is repeated in the character of Benedick. When he asks, "Would you have me speak after my custom as being a professed tyrant to the sex?" and when Beatrice says, "I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me," each knows that the other is acting, and each is in the other's thoughts. It is but a playful echo of the past when Benedick says, "I take thee for pity" and Beatrice "yields upon great persuasion."

V.

Shakespeare's Later Comedies.

Three of Shakespeare's comedies were written in the full maturity of his powers, in the years when he composed *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Lear*. This was between 1601 and 1607, when *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure* were produced. Comedy and tragedy were written alternately, perhaps simultaneously, while he was burdened with the management of his theatre and the cares of a player's life, yet there are no traces of hasty or ill-considered workmanship.

As You Like It.

Of all Shakespeare's comedies, none are more frequently acted nor more widely read than *As You Like It*. Yet it lacks the sparkling wit of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the luxuriance of fancy that beautifies *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the grandeur of poetical creation found in *The Tempest*. Its attraction lies perhaps in the fact that in no other play do we find the grace and imagination of Shakespeare's youth so mingled with the thoughtfulness of his maturer years.

The philosophic melancholy of Jaques discloses much of the troublesome experience that enriched his creator's mind between his thirty-seventh and forty-third years. Jaques may be Shakespeare's first type of "the censurer of mankind," but he is precisely the reverse of the character which the poet would have chosen had he intended the censure to be universally true and not individually characteristic. Jaques is strikingly a character of inconsistencies, one, as Ulrici expresses it, "of witty sentimentality and merry sadness." Nothing can be more beautiful than the delineation, but it is not necessary to suppose it is the result of the poet's self-consciousness. We are induced to believe that Shakespeare's unbounded charity made him feel that there was a chance of Jaques being held somewhat too much of an authority, and that he in consequence made the duke reprove him when he says:

Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

Duke S.—Fie on thee! I can tell what thou wouldst do.

Jaques.—What, for a counter, would I do but good?

Duke S.—Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin:
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
As sensual as the brutish sting itself;
And all the embossed sores, and headed evils,
That thou with license of free foot hast caught,
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.

Touchstone introduces himself with a bit of fool's logic—a comment upon human actions, derived from

premises that are either above or below ordinary reasonings. He is a faithful follower of Celia, and shares her affection for Rosalind. He has accompanied them to the forest, where he philosophizes in simple terms:

Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place; but travellers must be content.

And then he goes on to laugh at romance in a land of romance; but next we hear of him growing "deep-contemplative" over his dial:

Thus we may see how the world wags;
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;
And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot,
And thereby hangs a tale.

The fool's manners are changing. He did not talk thus in the court. He is now a sage:

Cor.—And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?

Touchstone.—Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life it is naught. In respect that it is solitary I like it very well; but in respect that it is private it is a very vile life. Now, in respect it is in the fields it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humor well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

The fool has lived apart from human sympathies. He has been a thing to make idle people laugh; to live in

himself alone; to be in the world and not of the world; to be licensed and despised; to have no responsibilities. The fool goes out of the social state in which he has moved, and he becomes a human being. His affections are called forth in a natural condition of society; he is restored to his fellow-creatures, a man, and not a fool. Shakespeare did not intend the courtship of Touchstone and Audrey to be a travesty of the romantic passion of Orlando and Rosalind.

Twelfth Night.

In a manuscript in the British Museum, *Twelfth Night* is thus described by one who witnessed the play as performed before the benchers of the Middle Temple in 1601: "At our feast we had a play called 'Twelve Night, or What You Will,' much like the *Comedy of Errors*, or *Menechmis* in Plautus. A good practice in it is to make the steward believe his lady widowe was in love with him, by counterfayting a letter as from his lady, in generall termes telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gestures, apparaile, etc., and then when he came to practise, making him believe they tooke him to be mad."

In this play are united the entertainment of an intrigue, contrived with great ingenuity, to a rich fund of comic characters and situations, and the beauteous colors of an ethereal poetry. In most of his plays Shakespeare treats love more as an affair of the imagination than of the heart; but here he has taken particular care to remind us that, in his language, the same word, fancy, signified

both fancy and love. The love of the music-enraptured duke for Olivia is not merely a fancy, but an imagination; Viola appears at first to fall arbitrarily in love with the duke, whom she serves as a page, although she afterward touches the tenderest strings of feeling; the proud Olivia is captivated by the modest and insinuating messenger of the duke, in whom she is far from suspecting a disguised rival, and at last, by a second deception, takes the brother for the sister. To these ideal follies a contrast is formed by the naked absurdities to which the entertaining tricks of the ludicrous persons of the piece give rise, under the pretext, also, of love; the silly and profligate knight's awkward courtship of Olivia, and her declaration of love to Viola; the imagination of the pedantic steward Malvolio, that his mistress is secretly in love with him, which carries him so far that he is at last shut up as a lunatic, and visited by the clown in the dress of a priest. These scenes are admirably conceived, and as significant as they are laughable.

Measure for Measure.

In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare was compelled, by the nature of the subject, to make his poetry more familiar with criminal justice than is usual with him. All kinds of proceedings connected with the subjects, all sorts of active or passive persons, pass in review before us: the hypocritical Lord Deputy, the compassionate Provost and the hard-hearted hangman; a young man of quality who is to suffer for the seduction of his mistress before marriage, loose wretches brought in by

the police, nay, even a hardened criminal, whom the preparations for his execution cannot awaken out of his callousness. Yet, notwithstanding this agitating truthfulness, how tender and mild is the pervading tone of the picture! The piece does not take its name from punishment; the true significance of the whole is the triumph of mercy over strict justice, no man being himself so free from errors as to be entitled to deal it out to his equals. The most beautiful feature is the character of Isabella, who, on the point of taking the veil, is prevailed upon by sisterly affection to tread again the perplexing ways of the world, while, amid the general corruption, the heavenly purity of her mind is not even stained with one unholy thought; in the humble robes of the novice she is a very angel of light. When the cold and stern Angelo, heretofore of unblemished reputation, whom the duke has commissioned, during his pretended absence, to restrain, by a rigid administration of the laws, the excesses of dissolute immorality, is himself tempted by the virgin charms of Isabella, supplicating for the pardon of her brother Claudio condemned to death for a youthful indiscretion; when at first, in timid and obscure language, he insinuates, but at last impudently avouches his readiness to grant Claudio's life at the sacrifice of her honor; when Isabella repulses his offer with a noble scorn; in her account of the interview to her brother, when the latter at first applauds her conduct, but at length, overcome by the fear of death, strives to persuade her to consent to dishonor—in these masterly scenes Shakespeare has sounded the inmost depths of the human heart.

The interest here reposes altogether on the represented action; curiosity contributes nothing to our delight, for the duke, in the disguise of a monk, is always present to watch over his dangerous representative, to avert every evil which could possibly be apprehended; and we look to him with confidence for a happy result. The duke acts the part of the monk naturally, even to deception; he unites in his person the wisdom of the priest and the prince. Only in his wisdom he is too fond of roundabout ways; his vanity is flattered with acting invisibly like an earthly providence; he takes more pleasure in overhearing his subjects than in governing them in the customary way. As he ultimately extends a free pardon to all the guilty, we do not see how his original purpose, in committing the execution of the laws to other hands, of restoring their strictness, has in any wise been accomplished. The poet might have had in view that, of the numberless slanders of the duke, told him by the petulant Lucio, in ignorance of the person whom he is addressing, those at least which regarded his singularities and whims were not wholly without foundation. It is deserving of remark, that Shakespeare, amid all the rancor of religious parties, takes a delight in painting the condition of a monk, and always represents his influence as beneficial. We find in him none of the black and knavish monks, which an enthusiasm for Protestantism, rather than poetical inspiration, has suggested to some of our modern poets. Shakespeare merely gives his monks an inclination to busy themselves in the affairs of others, after renouncing the world for themselves; with respect, how-

ever, to pious frauds, he does not represent them as very conscientious. Such are the parts acted by the monk in *Romeo and Juliet*, and another in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and even by the duke, whom, contrary to the well-known proverb, the cowl seems really to make a monk.

There are many beautiful scenes and passages in *Measure for Measure*, as, for instance, where the poet rises to one of his highest flights in the well-known lines:

Merciful heaven!
Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
Splitt'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,
Than the soft myrtle; but man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

Cymbeline.

In *Cymbeline* we have one of the most wonderful and one of the most perfect of Shakespeare's compositions. In it he has combined one of Boccaccio's novels with traditional tales of the ancient Britons reaching back to the times of the first Roman emperors, and he has contrived, by the most gentle transitions, to blend together into one harmonious whole the social manners of the newest times with olden heroic deeds, and even with appearances of the gods. In the character of Imogen no one feature of female excellence is omitted; her chaste tenderness, her softness and her virgin pride, her boundless resignation and her magna-

nimity toward her mistaken husband, by whom she is unjustly persecuted, her adventures in disguise, her apparent death and her recovery, form altogether a picture equally tender and affecting. "Other of Shakespeare's characters," says Mrs. Jameson, "are, as dramatic and poetic conceptions, more striking, more brilliant, more powerful; but of all his women, considered as individuals rather than as heroines, Imogen is the most perfect."

The two princes, Guiderius and Arviragus, both educated in the wilds, form a noble contrast to Miranda and Perdita. Shakespeare never tires of showing the superiority of the natural over the artificial. As Polyxenes says to Perdita in the *Winter's Tale*—

Nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean; so o'er that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock;
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race. This is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather; but
The art itself is nature.

With respect to the other plays, the wise and vigorous Belarius, who after long living as a hermit again becomes a hero, is a venerable figure; the Italian Iachimo's ready dissimulation and quick presence of mind are quite suitable to the bold treachery which he plays; Cymbeline, the father of Imogen, and even her husband, Posthumus, during the first half of the piece, are somewhat sacrificed, but this could not be otherwise;

the false and wicked queen is merely an instrument of the plot; she and her stupid son, Cloten, the only comic part of the piece, whose rude arrogance is portrayed with much humor, are, before the conclusion, got rid of by merited punishment. As for the heroical part of the fable, the war between the Romans and Britons, which brings on the *dénouement*, the poet in the extent of his plan had so little room to spare that he merely endeavors to represent it as a mute procession. But to the last scene, where all the numerous threads of the knot are united, he has again given its full development, that he might collect together into one focus the scattered impressions of the whole. This example and many others are a sufficient refutation of Johnson's assertion that Shakespeare usually hurries over the conclusion of his pieces. Rather does he, from a desire to satisfy the feelings, introduce much that, so far as the understanding of the *dénouement* requires, might in a strict sense be justly spared. Our modern spectators are far more impatient to see the curtain drop, when there is nothing more to be determined, than those of his day could have been.

Perhaps there is nothing in Shakespeare more beautifully managed, more touching in its romance, than the scene between Imogen and her unknown brothers. The gentleness, the grace, the "grief and patience" of the helpless Fidele, producing at once the deepest reverence and affection in the bold and daring mountaineers, still carry forward the character of Imogen under the same aspects. Belarius has beautifully described the brothers:

They are as gentle
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet, as rough,
Their royal blood enchafed, as the rud'st wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine
And make him stoop to the vale.

It was in their gentleness that Imogen found a support for her gentleness; it was in their roughness that the roughness of Cloten met its punishment. Imogen is still saved from the dangers with which craft and violence have surrounded her.

The Winter's Tale.

The Winter's Tale is as appropriately named as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is one of those tales which are peculiarly calculated to beguile the leisure of a long winter evening, and are even attractive and intelligible to childhood. While animated by fervent truth in the delineation of character and passion, and invested with the embellishments of poetry lowering itself, as it were, to the simplicity of the subject, they transport even manhood back to the golden age of imagination. The calculation of probabilities has nothing to do with such wonderful and fleeting adventures when all end at last in universal joy; and, accordingly, Shakespeare has here taken the greatest license of anachronisms and geographical errors. Not to mention other incongruities, he opens a free navigation between Sicily and Bohemia, and makes Giulio Romano the contemporary of the Delphic oracle. The piece divides itself

in some degree into two plays. Leontes becomes suddenly jealous of his royal bosom-friend, Polyxenes, who is on a visit to his court, and makes an attempt on his life, from which Polyxenes only saves himself by a clandestine flight; Hermione, suspected of infidelity, is thrown into prison, and the daughter which she there brings into the world is exposed on a remote coast; the accused queen, declared innocent by the oracle, on learning that her infant son has pined to death on her account, falls down in a swoon, and is mourned as dead by her husband, who becomes sensible, when too late, of his error: all this makes up the three first acts.

The last two acts are separated from the rest by a chasm of sixteen years; but the foregoing tragical catastrophe was only apparent, and this serves to connect the two parts. The princess, who has been exposed on the coast of Polyxenes' kingdom, grows up among low shepherds, but her tender beauty, her noble manners and elevation of sentiment bespeak her descent. The crown prince Florizel, in the course of his hawking, falls in with her and courts her in the disguise of a shepherd; at a rural entertainment Polyxenes discovers their attachment, and breaks out into a violent rage; the two lovers seek refuge from his persecutions at the court of Leontes in Sicily, where the discovery and general reconciliation take place. Lastly, when Leontes beholds, as he imagines, the statue of his lost wife, it descends from the niche: it is the woman herself, the still-living Hermione, who has kept herself so long concealed, and the piece ends with universal rejoicing. Autolycus, the merry peddler and pickpocket, is neces-

sary to complete the rustic feast, which Perdita renders meet for an assemblage of the gods.

The Tempest.

The Tempest has little of action or progressive movement; the union of Ferdinand and Miranda is settled at their first interview, and Prospero merely throws apparent obstacles in their way; the shipwrecked band go leisurely about the island; the attempts of Sebastian and Antonio on the life of the king of Naples, and the plot of Caliban and the drunken sailors against Prospero, are nothing but a feint, for we foresee that they will be completely frustrated by the magical skill of the latter; nothing remains, therefore, but the punishment of the guilty by dreadful sights which harrow up their consciences, and then the discovery and final reconciliation. Yet this want of movement is so admirably concealed by the most varied display of the fascinations of poetry, and the exhilaration of mirth, the details of the execution are so very attractive, that it requires no small degree of attention to perceive that the dénouement is, in some degree, anticipated in the exposition. The history of the loves of Ferdinand and Miranda, developed in a few short scenes, is enchantingly beautiful; an affecting union of chivalrous magnanimity on the one part, and on the other of the virgin openness of a heart which, brought up far from the world on an uninhabited island, has never learned to disguise its innocent movements. The wisdom of the princely hermit, Prospero, has a magical and mysterious

air; the disagreeable impression left by the black falsehood of the two usurpers is softened by the honest gossiping of the old and faithful Gonzalo; Trinculo and Stephano, two good-for-nothing drunkards, find a worthy associate in Caliban; and Ariel hovers sweetly over the whole as the personified genius of the wonderful fable.

Caliban has become a by-word as the strange creation of a poetical imagination. A mixture of gnome and savage, half demon, half brute, in his behavior we perceive at once the traces of his native disposition, and the influence of Prospero's education. The latter could only unfold his understanding, without, in the slightest degree, taming his rooted malignity. It is as if the use of reason and human speech were communicated to an ape. In inclination Caliban is malicious, cowardly, false and base; and yet he is essentially different from the vulgar knaves of a civilized world, as portrayed occasionally by Shakespeare. He is rude, but not vulgar; he never falls into the prosaic and low familiarity of his drunken associates, for he is, in his way, a poetical being; he always speaks in verse. He has picked up everything dissonant and thorny in language to compose out of it a vocabulary of his own; and of the whole variety of nature, the hateful, repulsive and deformed have alone been impressed on his imagination. The magical world of spirits, which the staff of Prospero has assembled on the island, casts merely a faint reflection into his mind, as a ray of light which falls into a dark cave, incapable of communicating to it either heat or illumination, serves merely to set in motion the poison-

ous vapors. The delineation of this monster is throughout consistent and profound, and, notwithstanding its hatefulness, by no means hurtful to our feelings, as the honor of human nature is left untouched.

In the zephyr-like Ariel the image of air is not to be mistaken, his name even bears an allusion to it; as, on the other hand, Caliban signifies the heavy element of earth. Yet they are neither of them simple, allegorical personifications, but beings individually determined. In general we find in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Tempest*, in the magical part of *Macbeth*, and wherever Shakespeare avails himself of the popular belief in the invisible presence of spirits, and the possibility of coming in contact with them, a profound view of the inward life of nature and her mysterious springs, which, it is true, can never be altogether unknown to the genuine poet, as poetry is altogether incompatible with mechanical physics, but which few have possessed in an equal degree with Dante and himself.

The principal characters in *The Tempest* are drawn with remarkable strength. In Prospero we have a delineation of peculiar profundity. He was, once, not altogether a just prince, not thoroughly a just man; but he had the disposition to be both. His soul thirsted after knowledge; his mind sincere in itself, after love; and his fancy, after the secrets of nature; but he forgot, what a prince should least of all forget, that, upon this moving earth, superior acquirements, in order to stand firmly, must be exercised carefully; that the world is full of enemies who can only be subdued by a watchful power and prudence, and that in certain situations

the armor ought never to be put off. Thus it became easy for his nearest relation, his brother, with the help of a powerful neighboring king who could not resist the offered advantage, to depose him from his dukedom. But as the pure morals of the prince, although they were perhaps but lazily exercised in behalf of his subjects, had nevertheless acquired their love, and the usurper did not dare to make an attack on the lives of the fallen, Prospero saved himself, his daughter, and a part of his magical books, upon a desert island. Here he becomes, what, in its highest sense, he had not yet been, a father and prince. His knowledge extends. Nature listens to him, perhaps because he learned to know and love her more inwardly. Zephyr-like spirits, full of a tender, frolicsome humor, and rude, earth-born gnomes, are compelled to serve him. The whole island is full of wonders, but only such as the fancy willingly receives, of sounds and songs, of merry helpers and comical tormentors; and Prospero shows his great human wisdom particularly in the manner with which he, as the spiritual centre, knows how to conduct his intercourse with friends and foes. First, with his daughter. Miranda is his highest, his one, his all; nevertheless there is visible a certain elevation, a solemnity, in his behavior toward her—peculiarities which, even with the deepest love, the severely tried and aged man early assumes. Indeed, much as the pure sense of his daughter must have long cheered him, he deems it good to relate to her now for the first time the history of his earlier sufferings, now that he has mastery over, and the power to punish, his adversaries. The external

miracles of Nature scarcely affect her upon an island where Nature herself has become a wonder, and the wonders become Nature. But for her, even on that account, there are only so many greater wonders in the heart and life of man.

Caliban is a character of the most powerful poetic fancy; and the more the character is investigated the more is our attention rewarded. He is the son of a witch, Sycorax, who, though long since dead, continues to work even from the grave. In her offspring there is a curious mixture of devil, man and beast, descending even to the fish species. He desires evil, not for the sake of evil or from mere wickedness, but because it is piquant, and because he feels himself oppressed. He is convinced that gross injustice has been done him, and thus he does not rightly feel that what he desires may be wicked. He knows perfectly well how powerful Prospero is, whose art may perhaps even subdue his maternal god Setebos, and that he himself is nothing but a slave. Nevertheless, he cannot cease to curse, and he curses with the gusto of a virtuoso in this more than liberal art. Whatever he can find most base and disgusting he surrounds almost artistically with the most inharmonious and hissing words, and then wishes them to fall upon Prospero and his lovely daughter. He knows very well that all this will help him nothing, but that at night he will have "cramps" and "side-stitches," and be "pinched by urchins;" but still he continues to pour out new curses. He has acquired one fixed idea—that the island belonged to his mother, and, consequently, now to himself, the crown prince. The

greatest horrors are pleasant to him, for he feels them only as jests which break the monotony of his slavery. He laments that he had been prevented from completing a frightful sin, and the thought of a murder gives him a real enjoyment, perhaps chiefly on account of the noise and confusion that it would produce.

An eminent critic has aptly remarked: "We find him only laughably horrible, and as a marvellous, though at bottom a feeble monster, highly interesting; for we foresee from the first that none of his threats will be fulfilled.

"Opposed to him stands Ariel, by no means an ethereal, featureless angel, but a real airy and frolicsome spirit, agreeable and open, but also capricious, roguish, and, with his other qualities, somewhat mischievous." When we hear Prospero recite his too modest epilogue, after laying down his enchanted wand, we feel that the magic we have experienced was too charming and mighty not to be enduring.

VI.

Shakespeare's Historical Plays.

The tragedies, *Richard III* and *King John*, are hardly inferior to the great masterpieces of tragedy that will be passed in review in the ensuing volume. But for the present purpose they can best be treated in the group of plays that deal with English history. Each in this group has its peculiar excellence, and as a whole they form the only series of the country's dramatized annals worthy to be so considered. With these may also be noticed the Roman plays, which are both tragic and historic, together with *Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles* and *Timon of Athens*.

The Roman Plays.

In the three Roman dramas, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the moderation with which Shakespeare excludes foreign appendages and arbitrary suppositions, and yet fully satisfies the wants of the stage, is particularly deserving of admiration. These plays are the very story itself, and under the apparent artlessness of adhering closely to history as he

found it, an uncommon degree of art is concealed in thus reviving the public life of ancient Rome.

Coriolanus.

In *Coriolanus* we have more comic intermixtures than in the other Roman dramas, as the many-headed multitude plays here a considerable part, and when Shakespeare portrays the blind movements of the people in a mass he almost always gives himself up to his merry humor. To the plebeians, whose folly is sufficiently conspicuous already, the original old satirist Menenius is added by way of enlargement. Droll scenes arise of a description altogether peculiar, and which are compatible only with such a political drama; for instance, when Coriolanus, to obtain the consulate, must solicit the lower order of citizens, whom he holds in contempt for their cowardice in war, but cannot so far master his haughty disposition as to assume the customary humility, and yet extorts from them their votes.

The leading idea of *Coriolanus*, the pivot upon which all the action turns, the key to the bitterness of factious hatred which runs through the whole drama, is the contest for power between the patricians and the plebeians. This is a broad principle, assuming various modifications in various states of society, but very slightly varied in its foundations and its results. He that truly works out the exhibition of this principle must paint men, let the scene be the Rome of the first tribunes or the Venice of the last doges. With suitable changes in accessories, the principle stands for the contests be-

tween aristocracy and democracy, in any country or in any age—under a republic or a monarchy. The historical truth and the philosophical principle which Shakespeare has embodied in *Coriolanus* are universal. In his opening scenes Shakespeare throws us at once into the centre of the contending classes of early Rome. We have no description of the nature of the factions; we see them:

First Citizen.—You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?

Citizens.—Resolved, resolved!

First Citizen.—First, you know, Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

Citizens.—We know't, we know't.

First Citizen.—Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price.

Citizens.—No more talking on't; let it be done.

The foundation of the violence is misery; its great stimulant is ignorance. The people are famishing for want of corn; they will kill one man, and that will give them corn at their own price; the murder will turn scarcity into plenty.

The scene in the second act, in which Coriolanus stands for the consulship, is among the most remarkable examples of Shakespeare's insight into character. In Plutarch he found a simple fact related without any comment; but in his representation of this fact Shakespeare had to create a character and to make that character act and react upon the character of the people. Coriolanus was by nature extremely proud, and his education, his social position, his individual supremacy,

made him still more so. He lives in a city of factions, and he dislikes, of course, the faction opposed to his order. The people represent the opinions that he dislikes, and he therefore dislikes the people. Yet he has pity and love for humanity, however humble. Coming into contact with the Roman populace to ask for their suffrage, his uppermost thought is "bid them wash their faces and keep their teeth clean." He outwardly despises that vanity of the people which will not reward desert unless it go hand in hand with solicitation. He betrays his contempt for the canvassers, even while he is canvassing:

I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother the people. to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle; and, since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practice the insinuating nod, and be off to them most counterfeitedly; that is, sir, I will counterfelt the bewitchment of some popular man, and give it bountifully to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul.

He is elected, but the people will not abide by their own election. When they are told by the tribunes that they have been treated scornfully, they become the mere tools of their crafty leaders. Coriolanus is insulted, and lashes himself into a fury which well nigh causes him to be hurled from the Tarpeian rock. Finally he is banished; he betakes himself to the Volscians, to make war on his countrymen, and Rome is beleaguered by her vanquished and despised enemies.

The struggle for power among the classes of young Rome ends in the death of the proud patrician by the

swords of those whom he had conquered. The retribution is a fearful one. The silly rabble escape with a terrible fright; Coriolanus loses his home, his glory, his life, for his pride and his revenge.

Julius Cæsar.

Centuries have rolled on. Rome has seen a constitution which had reconciled the differences of the patricians and the plebeians. The two orders had built a temple to Concord. Rome's power had increased; her territory had extended. In compounding their differences the patricians and the plebeians had appropriated to themselves all the wealth and honors of the state. There was a neglected class that the social system appeared to reject as well as to despise. The aristocratic party was again brought into antagonism with the impoverished and the destitute. Civil war was the natural result. Sulla established a short-lived constitution. The dissolution of the republic was at hand; the struggle was henceforth to be not between classes but individuals. The death of Julius Cæsar was soon followed by the final termination of the contest between the republican and the monarchical principle. Shakespeare saw the grandeur of the crisis, and he seized upon it for one of his lofty expositions of political philosophy. He has treated it as no other poet would have treated it, because he saw the exact relations of the contending principle to the future history of mankind. The death of Cæsar was not his catastrophe, but the death of the Roman republic at Philippi.

In the opening scene of his *Julius Cæsar*, Shakespeare has marked very distinctly the difference between the citizens of this period and of the days of *Coriolanus*. In the first play they are a turbulent community, without regular occupation; in the second they are "mechanical"—the carpenter or the cobbler. They "make holiday to see Cæsar, and to rejoice in his triumph."

Antony and Cleopatra.

The scene is changed. The boldest, perhaps the noblest, of the Roman triumvirs has almost forgotten Rome, and governs the Asiatic world with a magnificence equalled only by the voluptuousness into which he is plunged. In Rome, Octavius Cæsar is supreme, and now the question is, who shall govern the entire world. Thus the history of individuals becomes the history of Rome.

Coleridge pronounces *Antony and Cleopatra* by far the most wonderful of all Shakespeare's historical plays, even comparing it with *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Lear*. Antony is, of course, the Antony of *Julius Cæsar*, not merely the historical Antony, but the dramatic Antony drawn by the same hand. He is the orator that showed dead Cæsar's mantle to the Roman people; he is the soldier that after his triumph over Brutus said: "This was the noblest Roman of them all."

In Antony we observe a mixture of great qualities, weaknesses and vices; violent ambition and ebullitions of magnanimity; we see him now sinking into luxurious

enjoyment and then nobly ashamed of his own aberrations—manning himself to resolutions not unworthy of himself, which are always shipwrecked against the seductions of an artful woman.

The seductive arts of Cleopatra are in no respect veiled over; she is an ambiguous being made up of royal pride, female vanity, luxury, inconstancy and true attachment. Although the mutual passion of herself and Antony is without moral dignity, it still excites our sympathy as an insurmountable fascination; they seem formed for each other, and Cleopatra is as remarkable for her seductive charms as Antony for the splendor of his deeds. As they die for each other, we forgive them for having lived for each other. The open and lavish character of Antony is admirably contrasted with the heartless littleness of Octavius, whom Shakespeare seems to have completely seen through, without allowing himself to be led astray by the fortune and the fame of Augustus.

Timon of Athens.

Timon of Athens and *Troilus and Cressida* are not historical plays; but neither are they tragedies or comedies, and in the selection of their materials from antiquity, they have more affinity with those that deal with Roman than with English history. Of all the works of Shakespeare, *Timon* possesses most of the characters of satire, a laughing satire of parasites and flatterers, and a scathing outburst at the ingratitude of a false world. The story is very simply treated, and is definitely divided into large masses. In the first act we have

the joyous life of Timon, his noble and hospitable extravagance, and round him the throng of suitors of every description; in the second and third acts his embarrassment, and the trial which he is thereby reduced to make of his supposed friends, who all desert him in the hour of need; in the fourth and fifth acts, Timon's flight to the woods, his misanthropical melancholy, and his death. If the poet sides with Timon against the common practice of the world, he is by no means disposed to spare him. Timon was a fool in his generosity; in his discontent he is a madman.

The vanity of wishing to be singular is particularly evident in the incomparable scene where the Cynic Apemantus visits Timon in the wilderness. They have a sort of competition with each other in their trade of misanthropy; the Cynic reproaches the impoverished spendthrift with having been merely driven by necessity to take to the way of living which he himself had long been following of his free choice, and Timon cannot bear the thought of being merely an imitator of the Cynic. It is highly amusing to see the suitors, whom the ruined circumstances of their patron had dispersed, immediately flock to him again when they learn that he has been revisited by fortune. On the other hand, in the speeches of Timon, after he is undeceived, all hostile figures of speech are exhausted; it is a dictionary of imprecations.

Troilus and Cressida.

Troilus and Cressida is the only play of Shakespeare which he allowed to be printed without being previously

represented. It seems as if he here wished, without caring for theatrical effect, to satisfy the nicety of his peculiar wit, and the inclination to a certain irony in the characterization. The whole is, in fact, one continued irony of that crown of all heroic tales, the tale of Troy. The contemptible nature of the origin of the Trojan war, the laziness and discord with which it was carried on, so that the siege was made to last ten years, are only placed in clearer light by the noble descriptions, the sage and ingenious maxims with which the work overflows, and the high ideas which the heroes entertain of themselves and each other. Agamemnon's stately behavior, Menelaus' irritation, Nestor's experience, Ulysses' cunning, are all productive of no effect; and when they have at last arranged a single combat between the coarse braggart Ajax and Hector, the latter will not fight in good earnest, as Ajax is his cousin.

In all this let it not be conceived that any indignity was intended to the venerable Homer. Shakespeare had not the *Iliad* before him—which probably he could not read in the original—but the chivalrous romances of the Trojan war as derived from Chaucer, Dares, Phrygius and others. From these sources also he took the love-intrigue of Troilus and Cressida, a story at one time so popular in England that the name of Troilus had become proverbial for faithful and ill-requited love, and Cressida for female falsehood. The name of the agent between them, Pandarus, has even been adopted into the English language to signify those personages who dedicate themselves to similar services for inexperienced persons of both sexes. The endless contrivances

of the courteous Pandarus to bring the two lovers together, who do not stand in need of him—as Cressida requires no seduction—are comic in the extreme. The manner in which this treacherous beauty excites while she refuses, and converts the virgin modesty which she pretends into a means of seductive allurements, is portrayed in colors extremely elegant, though sufficiently voluptuous. Troilus, the pattern of lovers, looks patiently on, while his mistress enters into an intrigue with Diomed. No doubt, he swears that he will be revenged; but notwithstanding his violence in the fight next day, he does no harm to any one, and ends with only high-sounding threats.

Historical Dramas.

The ten dramas derived from English history are among the most valuable of Shakespeare's works, and were intended to form a series covering one of the most important periods in the national annals. Eight of these plays, from *Richard the Second* to *Richard the Third*, are linked together in an uninterrupted succession, and embrace a most eventful era of nearly a century in English history. The events portrayed not only follow one another, but they are linked together in the closest and most exact connection; and the cycle of revolts, parties, civil and foreign wars, which began with the deposition of Richard II, ends with the accession of Henry VII. The careless rule of the first of these monarchs, and his injudicious treatment of his own relations, drew upon him the rebellion

of Bolingbroke; his dethronement, however, was, in point of form, altogether unjust, and in no case could Bolingbroke be considered the rightful heir to the crown. This shrewd founder of the house of Lancaster never enjoyed in peace, as Henry IV, the fruits of his usurpation; his turbulent barons, the same who aided him in ascending the throne, allowed him not a moment's repose. On the other hand, he was jealous of the brilliant qualities of his son, and this distrust, more than any really low inclination, induced the prince, that he might avoid every appearance of ambition, to give himself up to dissolute society. These two circumstances form the subject-matter of the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*; the enterprises of the discontented make up the serious elements, and the wild youthful frolics of the heir-apparent supply the comic scenes.

When the warlike prince ascended the throne under the name of Henry V, he was determined to assert his ambiguous title; he considered foreign conquests as the best means of guarding against internal disturbances, and this gave rise to the glorious but fruitless war with France, which Shakespeare has described in *Henry the Fifth*. The early death of this king, the long legal minority of Henry VI, and his perpetual minority in the art of government, brought the greatest troubles on England. The dissensions of the regents, and the consequently wretched administration, occasioned the loss of the French conquests; and there arose a bold candidate for the crown, whose title was indisputable, if the prescription of three governments may not be assumed

to confer legitimacy on usurpation. Such was the origin of the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, which desolated the kingdom for many years, and ended with the victory of the house of York. All this Shakespeare has represented in the three parts of *Henry the Sixth*.

Edward IV shortened his life by excesses, and did not long enjoy the throne purchased at the expense of so many cruel deeds. His brother Richard, who had a great share in the elevation of the house of York, was not contented with the regency, and his ambition paved a way to the throne through treachery and violence; but his gloomy tyranny made him the object of the people's hatred, and at length drew on him the destruction which he merited. He was conquered by a descendant of the royal house unstained by the guilt of the civil wars, and what might seem defective in his title was made good by the merit of freeing his country from a monster. With the accession of Henry VII a new epoch of English history begins; the curse seemed at length to be expiated, and the long series of usurpations, revolts and civil wars, occasioned by the levity with which the second Richard sported away his crown, was now brought to an end.

Such is the evident connection of these eight plays with each other, but they were not composed in chronological order. According to all appearance, the four last were first written; this is certain, indeed, with respect to the three parts of *Henry the Sixth*; and *Richard the Third* is not only from its subject a continuation of these, but is also composed in the same style.

Shakespeare then went back to *Richard the Second*, and with the most careful art connected the second series with the first. The trilogies of the ancients have already given us an example of the possibility of forming a perfect dramatic whole, which shall yet contain allusions to something which goes before and follows it. In like manner most of these plays end with a very definite division in the history; *Richard the Second*, with the murder of that king; the second part of *Henry the Fourth*, with the accession of his son to the throne; *Henry the Fifth*, with the conclusion of peace with France; the first part of *Henry the Sixth*, also, with a treaty of peace; the third, with the murder of Henry, and Edward's elevation to the throne; *Richard the Third*, with his overthrow and death. The first part of *Henry the Fourth* and the second of *Henry the Sixth* are rounded off in a less satisfactory manner. The revolt of the nobles was only half quelled by the overthrow of Percy, and it is therefore continued through the following part. The victory of York at St. Alban's could as little be considered a decisive event, in the war of the two houses. Shakespeare has allowed this dramatic imperfection, if we may so call it, for the sake of advantages of much more importance. The picture of the civil war was too great and too rich in dreadful events for a single drama, and yet the uninterrupted series of events offered no more convenient resting-place. The government of Henry IV might certainly have been comprehended in one piece, but it possesses too little tragical interest and too little historical splendor to be attractive, if handled in a serious manner

throughout; hence Shakespeare has given to the comic characters belonging to the retinue of Prince Henry the freest development, and the half of the space is occupied by this constant interlude between the political events affording, in the deeds of the elderly scapegrace, Falstaff, and his comrades, a superb picture of genuine comedy.

The two other historical plays taken from English history are chronologically separate from this series. King John reigned nearly two centuries before Richard II, and between Richard III and Henry VIII comes the long reign of Henry VII, which Shakespeare passed over as unsusceptible of dramatic treatment. These two plays, however, may in some measure be considered as the prologue and epilogue to the other eight. In *King John* all the political and national motives which play so great a part in the following pieces are already indicated; wars and treaties with France; a usurpation, and the tyrannical actions which it draws after it; the influence of the clergy, and the factions of the nobles. *Henry the Eighth* again shows us the transition to another age; the policy of modern Europe, a refined court-life under a voluptuous monarch; the dangerous situation of favorites, who, after having assisted in effecting the fall of others, are themselves precipitated from power; in a word, despotism under a milder form, but not less unjust and cruel. By the prophecies on the birth of Elizabeth, Shakespeare has in some degree brought his great poem on English history down to his own time, as far at least as such recent events could be discreetly handled. He composed probably his *King*

John and *Henry the Eighth* at a later period, as an addition to the others.

King John.

In *King John* the political and warlike events are dressed out with solemn pomp, for the very reason that they possess but little of true grandeur. The falsehood and selfishness of the monarch speak in the style of a manifesto. Conventional dignity is most indispensable where personal dignity is wanting. The bastard Faulconbridge is the witty interpreter of this language; he ridicules the secret springs of politics, without disproving them, for he owns that he is endeavoring to make his fortune by similar means, and wishes rather to belong to the deceivers than the deceived, for in his view of the world there is no other choice. His litigation with his brother respecting the succession of his pretended father, by which he effects his acknowledgment at court as natural son of the most chivalrous king of England, Richard Cœur de Lion, forms a very entertaining and original prelude in the play itself.

When, amid so many disguises of real sentiments, and so much insincerity of expression, the poet shows us human nature without a veil, and allows us to take deep views of the inmost recesses of the mind, the impression produced is only the more deep and powerful. The short scene in which John urges Hubert to put out of the way Arthur, his young rival for the possession of the throne, is drawn with the touch of a perfect master; the cautious criminal hardly ventures to say to himself

what he wishes the other to do. The young and amiable prince becomes a sacrifice to unprincipled ambition; his fate excites the warmest sympathy. When Hubert, about to put out his eyes with the hot iron, is softened by his prayers, our compassion would be almost overwhelming, were it not relieved by the winning innocence of Arthur's childish speeches. Constance's maternal despair on her son's imprisonment is also of the highest beauty; and even the last moments of John, an unjust and feeble prince, whom we can neither respect nor admire, are yet so portrayed as to extinguish our displeasure with him and fill us with serious consideration on the deeds and fate of mortals.

Richard II.

In *Richard the Second* Shakespeare exhibits a noble, kingly nature, at first obscured by levity and the errors of an unbridled youth, and afterward purified by misfortune and rendered by it more highly and splendidly illustrious. When he has lost the love and reverence of his subjects and is on the point of losing also his throne, he then feels with a bitter enthusiasm the high vocation of the kingly dignity and its transcendental rights, independent of personal merit or changeable institutions. When the earthly crown has fallen from his head, he first appears as a king whose innate nobility no humiliation can annihilate. The political incident of the deposition is sketched with extraordinary knowledge of the world—the ebb of fortune, on the one hand, and on the other, the swelling tide, which carries everything

along with it. Old John of Gaunt is a model of chivalrous honor, and stands there like a pillar of the olden time which he has outlived. His son, Henry IV, was altogether unlike him, and his character is admirably sustained throughout the three pieces in which he appears.

Henry IV.

The first part of *Henry the Fourth* is particularly brilliant in the serious scenes, from the contrast between two young heroes, Prince Henry and Percy, with the characteristic name of Hotspur. All the amiability and attractiveness is certainly on the side of the prince; however familiar he makes himself with bad company, we can never mistake him for one of them; the ignoble does, indeed, touch, but it does not defile him; and his wildest freaks appear merely as tricks, by which his restless mind sought to burst through the inactivity to which he was constrained; for on the first occasion that wakes him out of his unruly levity he distinguishes himself without effort in the most chivalrous guise. Percy's boisterous valor is not without a mixture of rude manners, arrogance and boyish obstinacy; but these errors, which prepare for him an early death, cannot disfigure the majestic image of his noble youth.

After Percy has departed from the scene, the splendor is, it is true, at an end; there remain none but the subordinate participators in the revolts, who are reduced by Henry IV, more by policy than by warlike achievements. To overcome this dearth of matter, Shakespeare was in the second part obliged to employ

great art, as he never allowed himself to adorn history with more arbitrary embellishments than the dramatic form rendered indispensable. The piece is opened by confused rumors from the field of battle; the powerful impression produced by Percy's fall, whose name and reputation were peculiarly adapted to be the watchword of a bold enterprise, make him in some degree an acting personage after his death. The last acts are occupied with the dying king's remorse of conscience, his uneasiness at the behavior of the prince, and lastly, the clearing up of the misunderstanding between father and son, which make up several most affecting scenes. All this, however, would still be inadequate to fill the stage, if the serious events were not interrupted by a comedy which runs through both parts of the play, which is enriched from time to time with new figures, and which comes to its climax at the conclusion of the whole, namely, when Henry V, immediately after ascending the throne, banishes to a proper distance the companions of his youthful excesses, who had promised to themselves a rich harvest from his kingly favor.

Falstaff.

Falstaff is the crown of Shakespeare's comic invention. He has, without exhausting himself, continued this character throughout three plays and exhibited him in every variety of situation; the figure is drawn so definitely and individually that even to the mere reader it conveys the clear impression of personal acquaintance. Falstaff is the most agreeable and entertaining

knave that ever was portrayed. His contemptible qualities are not disguised: old, lecherous and dissolute; corpulent beyond measure, and always intent upon indulging his body with eating, drinking and sleeping; constantly in debt, and anything but conscientious in his choice of means by which money is to be raised; a cowardly soldier and a lying braggart; a flatterer of his friends before their face and a satirist behind their backs, and yet we are never disgusted with him. We see that his tender care of himself is without any mixture of malice toward others; he will only not be disturbed in the enjoyment of his sensuality, and this he obtains through the activity of his understanding. Always on the alert, and good-humored, ever ready to crack jokes on others, and to enter into those of which he is himself the subject, so that he justly boasts he is not only witty himself but the cause of wit in others, he is an admirable companion for youthful idleness and levity. Under a helpless exterior he conceals an extremely acute mind; he has always at command some dexterous turn whenever any of his free jokes begin to give displeasure; he is shrewd in his distinctions between those whose favor he has to win and those over whom he may assume a familiar authority.

Henry V.

King Henry V is manifestly Shakespeare's favorite hero in English history: he paints him as endowed with every chivalrous and kingly virtue; open, sincere, affable, yet, as a sort of reminiscence of his youth, still

disposed to innocent raillery, in the intervals between his perilous and glorious achievements. To represent on the stage his whole history subsequent to his accession to the throne, was attended with great difficulty. The conquests in France were the only distinguished events of his reign; and war is an epic rather than a dramatic subject. Before the battle of Agincourt he paints in the most lively colors the light-minded impatience of the French leaders for the moment of battle, which to them seemed infallibly the moment of victory; on the other hand he describes the uneasiness of the English king and his army in their desperate situation, coupled with their firm determination, if they must fall, at least to fall with honor. He applies this as a general contrast between the French and English national characters; a contrast which betrays a partiality for his own nation, certainly excusable in a poet, especially when he is backed with such a glorious event as the memorable battle in question.

He has surrounded the general events of the war with a fullness of individual, characteristic and sometimes comic features. But all this variety still seemed to the poet insufficient to animate a play of which the subject was a conquest, and nothing but a conquest. He has, therefore, tacked a prologue, or what was then termed a chorus, to the beginning of each act. These prologues, which unite epic pomp and solemnity with lyrical sublimity and solemnity, and among which the description of the two camps before the battle of Agincourt forms a most admirable night-piece, are intended to keep the spectators constantly in mind that

HENRY VI

After an original painting by John Opie, R. A.

LONDON

Printed by J. G. ALLEN

*How say you, madam? Are you now persuaded
That Talbot is but a shadow of himself?*

HENRY VI.—SHAKESPEARE.



the peculiar grandeur of the actions described cannot be developed on a narrow stage, and that they must, therefore, supply, from their own imaginations, the deficiencies of the representation.

Henry VI.

The three parts of *Henry the Sixth* were composed much earlier than the preceding pieces. Shakespeare's choice fell first on this period of English history, so full of misery and horrors of every kind, because the pathetic is naturally suitable to a young poet's mind. Careless as to the apparent unconnectedness of contemporary events, he bestows little attention on preparation and development; all the figures follow in rapid succession and announce themselves emphatically for what we ought to take them; from scenes where the effect is sufficiently agitating to form the catastrophe of a less extensive plan, the poet perpetually hurries us on to catastrophes still more dreadful. The first part contains only the organization of the factions of the White and Red Rose, under which ensigns such bloody deeds were afterward perpetrated; the varying results of the war in France principally fill the stage. The wonderful saviour of her country, Joan of Arc, is portrayed by Shakespeare with an Englishman's prejudices; yet he at first leaves it doubtful whether she has not in reality a heavenly mission.

In the second part, the events more particularly prominent are the murder of the honest Protector, Gloster, and its consequences; the death of Cardinal

Beaufort; the parting of the queen from her favorite Suffolk, and his death by the hands of savage pirates; then the insurrection of Jack Cade under an assumed name, and at the instigation of the duke of York. The short scene where Cardinal Beaufort, who is tormented by his conscience on account of the murder of Gloster, is visited on his deathbed by Henry VI, is sublime beyond all praise. The civil war only begins in the second part; in the third it is unfolded in all its destructive fury. The picture becomes gloomier and seems at last to be painted rather with blood than with colors.

Richard III.

The part of *Richard III* has become highly celebrated from its having been played by great actors, and this has naturally increased the admiration of the piece itself, for many readers of Shakespeare stand in want of good interpreters of the poet to understand him properly. This admiration is well founded, though there seems to be an injustice in considering the three parts of *Henry the Sixth* as of little value compared with *Richard the Third*. These four plays were undoubtedly composed in succession, as is proved by the style and the spirit in the handling of the subject. The last is definitely announced in the one which precedes it, and is also full of references to it; the same views run through the series; in a word, the whole make together a single work. Even the deep characterization of Richard is by no means the exclusive property of the piece which bears his name;

his character is very distinctly drawn in the two last parts of *Henry the Sixth*; nay, even his first speeches lead us already to form the most unfavorable anticipations of his future conduct. He lowers obliquely like a dark thunder-cloud on the horizon, which gradually approaches nearer and nearer, and first pours out the devastating elements with which it is charged when it hangs over the heads of mortals.

Although the last four pieces of the historical series paint later events, yet the plays of *Henry the Fourth* and *Fifth* have, in tone and costume, a much more modern appearance. This is partly owing to the number of comic scenes; for the comic must always be founded not only in national, but also in contemporary manners. Bloody revolutions and devastations of civil war appear to posterity as a relapse into an earlier and more uncultivated condition of society, or they are in reality accompanied by such a relapse into unbridled savageness. As it is peculiar to the heroic poem to paint the races of men in times past as colossal in strength of body and resolution, so in these plays, the voices of a Talbot, a Warwick, a Clifford and others ring on our ears so plainly that we imagine we hear the clanging trumpets of foreign or of civil war.

Henry VIII.

Shakespeare was as profound as an historian as a poet; when we compare his *Henry the Eighth* with the preceding pieces, we see distinctly that the English nation, during the long, peaceable and economical reign of

Henry VII, had made a sudden transition from the powerful confusion of the middle age, to the tameness of modern times. *Henry the Eighth* has, therefore, somewhat of a prosaic appearance; for Shakespeare, artist-like, adapted himself always to the quality of his materials. If others of his works, both in elevation of fancy and in energy of pathos and character, tower far above this, we have here, on the other hand, occasion to admire his nice powers of discrimination and his perfect knowledge of courts and the world. What tact was requisite to represent before the eyes of the queen subjects of such a delicate nature, and in which she was personally so nearly concerned, without doing violence to the truth! He has unmasked the tyrannical king, and to the intelligent observer exhibited him such as he really was; haughty and obstinate, voluptuous and unfeeling, extravagant in conferring favors and revengeful under the pretext of justice; and yet the picture is so dexterously handled that a daughter might regard it favorably.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

BY

NICHOLAS UDALL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER.

MATHEW MERRYGREEKE, *his friend.*

GAWIN GOODLUCK, *London Merchant, affianced to
Custance.*

TRISTRAM TRUSTY, *his friend.*

DOBINET DOUGHTIE, *Servant to Roister*

TOM TRUPENIE, *Servant to Custance.*

SYM SURESBY, *Servant to Goodluck.*

HARPAX, *and other Musicians in Roister's service.*

SCRIVENER.

DAME CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, *a wealthy Widow.*

MADGE MUMBLECRUST, *her old Nurse.*

TIBET TALKAPACE,	}	<i>Maids of Custance.</i>
ANNOT ALYFACE,		

SCENE—LONDON.

Ralph Roister Doister.

This play, termed by the author an "Enterlude," was performed before Queen Mary about the year 1554. It is the first and the best of its period; the characters are real men and women, cleverly and consistently portrayed, and the ingeniously ambiguous love letter is a brilliant example of the author's versatility. It is not a comedy in the strict sense of the word, but, like the "Merry Interludes," which John Heywood wrote, is farcical in motive, character and incident. Though an imitation of Terence, whose plays Udall translated, it is not a servile imitation, and is full of comic situations.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Mathew Merrygreeke.—As long liveth the merry man, they say,

As doth the sorry man, and longer by a day.

Yet the grasshopper for all his summer piping,

Starveth in winter with hungry griping,

Therefore another saw doth men advise,

That they be together both merry and wise.

This lesson must I practise, or else ere long,

With me Mathew Merrygreeke it will be wrong.

Indeed men so call me, for by him that us bought,

What ever chance betide, I can take no thought,

Yet wisdom would that I did my self bethink

Where to be provided this day of meat and drink:
For know ye that for all this merry note of mine,
He might pose me now that should ask where I dine.
My living lieth here and there, of God's grace,
Sometime with this good man, sometime in that place,
Sometime Davy Diceplayer, when he hath well cast,
Keepeth revel rout as long as it will last.
Sometime I hang on Hankyn Hoddydodies sleeve,
But this day on Ralph Roister Doister by his leave.
For truly of all men he is my chief banker
Both for meat and money, and my chief sheet-anchor.
For, sooth Roister Doister in that he doth say,
And require what ye will ye shall have no nay.
But now of Roister Doister somewhat to express,
That ye may esteem him after his worthiness,
In these twenty towns and seek them throughout,
Is not the like stock, whereon to graft a lout.
All the day long is he facing and craking
Of his great acts in fighting and fraymaking:
But when Roister Doister is put to his proof,
To keep the Queen's peace is more for his behoof.
If any woman smile or cast on him an eye,
Up is he to the hard ears in love by and by,
And in all the hot haste must she be his wife,
Else farewell his good days, and farewell his life,
Maister Raufe Roister Doister is but dead and gone
Except she on him take some compassion,
Then chief of counsel, must be Mathew Merrygreeke,
What if I for marriage to such an one seek?
Then must I sooth it, what ever it is:
For what he sayth or doth can not be amiss,
Hold up his yea and nay, be his own white son,
Praise and rouse him well, and ye have his heart won,
For so well liketh he his own fond fashions
That he taketh pride of false commendations.
But such sport have I with him as I would not leese,
Though I should be bound to live on bread and cheese.
For exalt him, and have him as ye like in deed:
Yea to hold his finger in a hole for a need.
I can with a word make him fain or loth,

I can with as much make him pleased or wroth,
I can when I will make him merry and glad,
I can when I like make him sorry and sad,
I can set him in hope and eke in despair,
I can make him speak rough, and make him speak fair.
But I marvel I see him not all this same day,
I will seek him out: But lo! he cometh this way.

SCENE II.

Roister Doister, Mathew Merrygreeke.

Roister.—Come death when thou wilt, I am weary of my life.

Merry.—I told you I, we should woo another wife.

Roister.—Why did God make me such a goodly person?

Merry.—He is in by the weak, we shall have sport anon.

Roister.—And where is my trusty friend Mathew Merrygreeke?

Merry.—I will make as I saw him not, he doth me seek.

Roister.—I have him espied me thinketh, yond is he,

Ho, Mathew Merrygreeke, my friend, a word with thee.

Merry.—I will not hear him, but make as I had haste,

Farewell all my good friends, the time away doth waste,

And the tide, they say, tarrieth for no man.

Roister.—Thou must with thy good counsel help me if thou can.

Merry.—God keep thee worshipful, Maister Roister Doister,

And farewell the lusty Maister Roister Doister.

Roister.—I must needs speak with thee a word or twain.

Merry.—Within a month or two I will be here again,

Negligence in great affairs ye know may mar all.

Roister.—Attend upon me now, and well reward thee I shall.

Merry.—I have take my leave, and the tide is well spent.

Roister.—I die except thou help, I pray thee be content,

Do thy part well now, and ask what thou wilt,

For without thy aid my matter is all split.

Merry.—Then to serve your turn I will some pains take,

And let all my own affairs alone for your sake.

Roister.—My whole hope and trust resteth only in thee.

Merry.—Then can ye not do amiss whatever it be.

Roister.—Gramercies Merrygreeke, most bound to thee I am.

Merry.—But up with that heart, and speak out like a ram,
Ye speak like a capon that had the cough now:
Be of good cheer, anon ye shall do well ynow.

Roister.—Upon thy comfort, I will all things well handle.

Merry.—So lo, that is a breast to blow out a candle.

But what is this great matter I would fain know,
We shall find remedy therefor I trow.

Do ye lack money? Ye know my old offers,
Ye have always a key to my purse and coffers.

Roister.—I thank thee: had ever man such a friend?

Merry.—Ye give unto me: I must needs to you lend.

Roister.—Nay, I have money plenty all things to discharge.

Merry.—(Aside.) That knew I right well when I made offer
so large.

Roister.—But it is no such matter.

Merry.—What is it then?

Are ye in danger of debt to any man?
If ye be, take no thought nor be not afraid,
Let them hardly take thought how they shall be paid.

Roister.—Tut, I owe naught.

Merry.—What then? fear ye imprisonment?

Roister.—No.

Merry.—What is it? hath any man threatened you to beat?

Roister.—What is he that durst have put me in that heat?
He that beateth me, by his arms, shall well find
That I will not be far from him nor run behind.

Merry.—That thing know all men ever since ye overthrew
The fellow of the Lion which Hercules slew.

But what is it then?

Roister.—Of love I make my moan.

Merry.—Ah, this foolish love, wilt never let us alone?

But because ye were refused the last day,
Ye said ye would ne'er more be entangled that way:
"I would meddle no more, since I find all so unkind."

Roister.—Yea, but I cannot so put love out of my mind.

Merry.—But is your love, tell me first, in any wise,
In the way of marriage, or of merchandise?
If it may otherwise than lawful be found,
Ye get none of my help for an hundred pound.

Roister.—No, by my troth, I would have her to my wife.

Merry.—Then are ye a good man, and God save your life,
And what or who is she, with whom ye are in love?

Roister.—A woman whom I know not by what means to move.

Merry.—Who is it?

Roister.—A woman, yonder.

Merry.—What is her name?

Roister.—Her yonder.

Merry.—Who?

Roister.—Mistress ah——

Merry.—Fie! fie! for shame!

Love ye, and know not whom but "her yonder, a
woman?"

We shall then get you a wife, I cannot tell when.

Roister.—The fair woman that supped with us yesternight—
And I heard her name twice or thrice, and had it right.

Merry.—Yea, ye may see ye ne'er take me to good cheer with
you;

If ye had, I could have told you her name now.

Roister.—I was to blame indeed, but the next time, perchance,
And she dwelleth in this house.

Merry.—What, Christian Custance?

Roister.—Except I have her to my wife, I shall run mad.

Merry.—Nay, unwise, perhaps; but I warrant you for mad.

Roister.—I am utterly dead unless I have my desire.

Merry.—Where be the bellows that blew this sudden fire?

Roister.—I hear she is worth a thousand pound and more.

Merry.—Yea, but learn this one lesson of me afore:

An hundred pound of marriage money doubtless
Is ever thirty pound sterling, or somewhat less;
So that her thousand pound, if she be thrifty,

Is more near about two hundred and fifty.

Howbeit, wooers and widows are never poor.

Roister.—Is she a widow? I love her better therefore.

Merry.—But I hear she hath made promise to another.

Roister.—He shall go without her, if he were my brother.

Merry.—I have heard say, I am right well advised,
That she hath to Gawin Goodluck promised.

Roister.—What is that Gawin Goodluck?

Merry.—A merchant man.

Roister.—Shall he speed afore me? Nay, sir, by sweet Saint
Anne.

Ah, sir, Backare, quoth Mortimer to his sow,
I will have her my own self I make God a vow.
For I tell thee she is worth a thousand pound.

Merry.—Yet a fitter wife for your worship might be found.
Such a goodly man as you might get one with land,
Besides pounds of gold a thousand and a thousand,
And a thousand, and a thousand, and a thousand,
And so to the sum of twenty hundred thousand.
Your most goodly personage is worthy of no less.

Roister.—I am sorry God made me so comely, doubtless,
For that maketh me everywhere so highly favored,
And all women on me so enamored.

Merry.—Enamored, quoth you? Have ye spied out that?
Ah, sir, marry, now I see you know what is what.
Enamored? Marry, sir, say that again;
But I thought not ye had marked it so plain.

Roister.—Yes, everywhere they gaze all upon me and stare.

Merry.—Yea, malkin, I warrant you as much as they dare.
And ye will not believe what they say in the street,
When your worship passeth by all such as I meet,
That sometimes I can scarce find what answer to make.
Who is this? saith one; Sir Launcelot du Lake?
Who is this? Great Guy of Warwick? saith another.
No, say I, it is the thirteenth Hercules, brother.
Who is this? Noble Hector of Troy? saith the third.
No, but of the same nest, say I, it is a bird.
Who is this? Great Goliah, Sampson or Colbrande?

No, say I, but it is a Brutus of the Holy Land.
Who is this? Great Alexander or Charlemagne?
No, it is the tenth worthy, say I to them again.
I know not if I said well.

Roister.—Yes, for so I am.

Merry.—Yea, for there were but nine worthies before ye came.
To some others the third Cato I do you call.
And so well as I can I answer them all.
Sir, I pray you what lord or great gentleman is this?
Maister Ralph Roister Doister, dame, say I, I wis.
O Lord! saith she then, what a goodly man it is;
Would Christ I had such a husband as he is.
O Lord! say some, that the sight of his face we lack.
It is enough for you, say I, to see his back.
His face is for ladies of high and noble parages,
With whom he hardly 'scapeth great marriages.
With much more than this, and much otherwise.

Roister.—I can thee thank that thou canst such answers devise;
But I perceive thou dost me thoroughly know.

Merry.—I mark your manners for my own learning, I trow;
But such is your beauty, and such are your acts,
Such is your personage, and such are your facts,
That all women fair and foul, more or less,
They eye you, they love you, they talk of you, doubtless;
Your pleasant look maketh them all merry,
Ye pass not by but they laugh till they be weary;
Yea, and money could I have, the truth to tell,
Of many, to bring you that way where they dwell.

Roister.—Merrygreeke, for this thy reporting well of me—

Merry.—What should I else, sir? It is my duty, pardee.

Roister.—I promise thou shalt not lack while I have a groat.

Merry.—Faith, sir, and I never had more need of a new coat.

Roister.—Thou shalt have one to-morrow, and gold for to spend.

Merry.—Then I trust to bring the day to a good end.

For, as for mine own part, having money enow,
I could live only with the remembrance of you.
But now to your widow whom you love so hot.

Roister.—By cock, thou sayest truth! I had almost forgot.

Merry.—What if Christian Custance will not have you, what?

Roister.—Have me? yes I warrant you, never doubt of that;

I know she loveth me, but she dare not speak.

Merry.—Indeed, meet it were somebody should it break.

Roister.—She looked on me twenty times yesternight,

And laughed so——

Merry.—That she could not sit upright.

Roister.—No, faith, could she not.

Merry.—No even such a thing I cast.

Roister.—But for wooing, thou knowest, women are shamefast.

But and she knew my mind, I know she would be glad,

And think it the best chance that ever she had.

Merry.—To her then, like a man, and be bold forth to start;

Wooers never speed well that have a false heart.

Roister.—What may I best do?

Merry.—Sir, remain ye a while here.

Ere long one or other of her house will appear.

Ye know my mind.

Roister.—Yea, now, hardly let me alone.

Merry.—In the meantime, sir, if you please, I will home,

And call your musicians, for in this your case

It would set you forth, and all your wooing grace,

Ye may not lack your instruments to play and sing.

Roister.—Thou knowest I can do that.

Merry.—As well as anything.

Shall I go call your folks, that ye may show a cast?

(Specimen.)

Roister.—Yea, run, I beseech thee, in all possible haste.

Merry.—I go.

Roister.—Yea, for I love singing out of measure;

It comforteth my spirits and doeth me great pleasure.

But who cometh forth yonder from my sweetheart Custance?

My matter frameth well; this is a lucky chance.

In the next scene Roister pays court to the serving

maids of Custance, and in the one following that lady receives a love letter from her old nurse Madge.

Custance.—Who gave thee this letter, Margerie Mumblecrust?

Mumbl.—A lusty gay bachelor gave it me of trust,
And if ye seek him, he will allow your doing.

Custance.—Yea, but where learned he that manner of wooing?

Mumbl.—If to sue to him you will any pains take,
He will have you to his wife, he saith, for my sake.

Custance.—Some wise gentlemen belike. I am bespoken:
And I thought verily this had been some token
From my dear spouse Gawin Goodluck, whom when him
please
God luckily send home to give both our hearts ease.

Mumbl.—A jolly man it is, I wot well by report,
And would have you to him for marriage resort:
Best open the writing, and see what it doth speak.

Custance.—At this time, nurse, I will neither read nor break.

Mumbl.—He promised to give you a whole peck of gold.

Custance.—Perchance lack of a pint when it shall be all told.

Mumbl.—I would take a gay, rich husband, if I were you.

Custance.—In good sooth, Madge, e'en so would I, if I were thou.
But no more of this fond talk now; let us go in
And see thou no more move me folly to begin.
Nor bring me no more letters for no man's pleasure,
But thou know from whom.

Mumbl.—I warrant ye shall be sure.

ACT II.

Madge discusses the matter with Roister's servant Doughtie.

Mumblecrust.—I was ne'er so shook up afore since I was born,
That our mistress could not have chid I would have
sworn;

And I pray God I die if I meant any harm;
But for my lifetime this shall be to me a charm.

Doughtie.—God you save and see, nurse, and how is it with you?

Mumbl.—Marry, a great deal the worse it is for such as thou.

Dough.—For me? Why so?

Mumbl.—Why, wert not thou one of them, say,

That sang and played here with the gentleman last day?

Dough.—Yes, and he would know if you have for him spoken.

And prays you to deliver this ring and token.

Mumbl.—Now, by the token that God tokened, brother,

I will deliver no token one nor other.

I have once been so sent for your master's pleasure,

As I will not be again for all his treasure.

Dough.—He will thank you, woman.

Mumbl.—I will none of his thank.

Dough.—I ween I am a prophet, this gear will prove blank;

But why should I home again without answer go?

It were better go to Rome on my head than so.

I will tarry here this month, but some of the house

Shall take it of me, and then I care not a louse.

But yonder cometh forth a wench or a lad;

If he have not one Lombard's touch, my luck is bad.

Mistress Custance's servants talk of the affair.

Trupenie.—I am clean lost for lack of merry company;

We agree not half well within, our wenches and I;

They will command like mistresses, they will forbid;

If they be not served, Trupeny must be chid.

Let them be as merry now as ye can desire,

With turning of a hand our mirth lieth in the mire;

I cannot skill of such changeable mettle;

There is nothing with them but in dock, out nettle.

Dough.—Whether is it better that I speak to him first,

Or he first to me, it is good to cast the worst.

If I begin first, he will smell all my purpose;

Otherwise I shall not need anything to disclose.

Trupenie.—What boy have we yonder? I will see what he is.

Dough.—He cometh to me. It is hereabout I wis.

Trupenie.—Wouldst thou aught, friend, that thou lookest so about?

Dough.—Yea, but whether ye can help me or no I doubt.

I seek one Mistress Custance house here dwelling.

Trupenie.—It is my mistress ye seek, too, by your telling.

Dough.—Is there any of that name here but she?

Trupenie.—Not one in all the whole town that I know, pardee.

Dough.—A widow she is, I trow.

Trupenie.—And what and she be?

Dough.—But ensured to an husband.

Trupenie.—Yea, so think we.

Dough.—And I dwell with her husband that trusteth to be.

Trupenie.—In faith, then must thou needs be welcome to me.

Let us for acquaintance shake hands together,

And whate'er thou be, heartily welcome hither.

Tib. Talk.—Well, Trupenie, never but flinging. (Running about.)

An. Alyface.—And frisking?

Trupenie.—Well, Tibet and Annot, still swinging and whisking?

Tib. Talk.—But ye roll abroad.

An. Alyface.—In the street everywhere.

Trupenie.—Where are ye twain, in chambers, when ye meet me there?

But come hither, fools; I have one now by the hand,

Servant to him that must be our mistress' husband;

Bid him welcome.

An. Alyface.—To me truly is he welcome.

Tib. Talk.—Forsooth, and as I may say, heartily welcome.

Dough.—I thank you, mistress maids.

An. Alyface.—I hope we shall better know.

Tib. Talk.—And when will our new master come?

Dough.—Shortly, I trow.

Tib. Talk.—I would it were to-morrow, for till he resort,

Our mistress, being a widow, hath small comfort;
 And I heard our nurse speak of an husband to-day,
 Ready for our mistress, a rich man and gay;
 And we shall go in our French hoods every day,
 In our silk cassocks, I warrant you, fresh and gay,
 In our trick ferdegews and billiments of gold,
 Brave in our suits of change seven double fold.
 Then shall ye see Tibet, sirs, tread the moss so trim—
 Nay, who said I tread? Ye shall see her glide and swim,
 Not lumperde, clumperdee, like our spaniel Rig.

Trupenie.—Marry, then, prickmedainty, come toast me a fig.
 Who shall then know our Tib. Talk apace, trow ye?

An. Alyface.—And why not Annot Alyface as fine as she?

Trupenie.—And what had Tom Trupenie—a father or none?

An. Alyface.—Then our pretty new-come man will look to be
 one.

Trupenie.—We four, I trust, shall be a jolly, merry knot.

Tib. Talk.—Will you now in with us unto our mistress go?

Dough.—I have first for my master an errand or two.

But I have here from him a token and a ring;

They shall have most thank of her that first doth it bring.

Tib. Talk.—Marry that will I.

Trupenie.—See and Tibet snatch not now.

Tib. Talk.—And why may not I, sir, get thanks as well as you?
 (Exit.)

An. Alyface.—Yet get ye not all; we will go with you, both,
 And have part of your thanks, be ye never so loth.

(Exeunt.)

Dough.—So my hands are rid of it, I care for no more.

I may now return home; so I durst not afore.

Mistress Custance scolds her servants.

Custance.—Nay, come forth all three; and come hither, pretty
 maid:

Will not so many forewarnings make you afraid?

Tib. Talk.—Yes, forsooth.

Custance.—But still be a runner up and down,
Still be a bringer of tidings and tokens to town.

Tib. Talk.—No, forsooth, mistress.

Custance.—Is all your delight and joy
In whisking and ramping abroad like a tomboy?

Tib. Talk.—Forsooth, these were there too, Annot and Trupenie.

Trupenie.—Yea, but ye alone took it, ye cannot deny.

An. Alyface.—Yea, that ye did.

Tib. Talk.—But if I had not, ye twain would.

Custance.—You great calf, ye should have more wit, so ye
should.

But why should any of you take such things in hand?

Tib. Talk.—Because it came from him that must be your husband.

Custance.—How do ye know that?

Tib. Talk.—Forsooth, the boy did say so.

Custance.—What was his name?

An. Alyface.—We asked not. He is not yet far gone

Trupenie.—I will see.

Custance.—If thou canst find him in the street, bring him to me.

Trupenie.—Yes. (Exit.)

Custance.—Well, ye naughty girls, if ever I perceive
That henceforth you do letters or tokens receive,
To bring unto me from any person or place,
Except ye first show me the party face to face,
Either thou or thou, full truly abye thou shalt.

Tib. Talk.—Pardon this, and the next time powder me in salt.

Custance.—I shall make all girls by you twain to beware.

Tib. Talk.—If ever I offend again, do not me spare.
But if ever I see that false boy any more,
By your mistressship's license I tell you afore,
I will rather have my coat twenty times swinged,
Than on the naughty wag not to be avenged.

Custance.—Good wenches would not so ramp abroad idly.
But keep within doors and ply their work earnestly.
If one would speak with me that is a man likely,

Ye shall have right good thank to bring me word quickly.
 But otherwise with messages to come in post,
 From henceforth, I promise you, shall be to your cost.
 Get you in to your work.

Tib. and An.—Yes, forsooth.

Custance.—Hence both twain,
 And let me see you play me such a part again!
(They go.)

Trupenie.—(Entering.) Mistress, I have run past the far end of
 the street,

Yet can I not yonder crafty boy see nor meet.

Custance.—No?

Trupenie.—Yet I looked as far beyond the people
 As one may see out of the top of Paul's steeple.

Custance.—Hence in at doors, and let me no more be vexed.

Trupenie.—Forgive me this one fault, and lay on for the next.

Custance.—Now will I in, too, for I think, so God me mend,
 This will prove some foolish matter in the end.

ACT III.

Merrygreeke.—Now say this again: he hath somewhat to do
 Who followeth the trace of one that goes to woo,
 Specially that hath no more wit in his head
 Than my cousin Roister Doister, withal, is led.
 I am sent in all haste to espy and to mark
 How our letters and tokens are likely to work.
 Master Roister Doister must have answer in haste,
 For he loveth not to spend much labor in waste.
 Now, as for Christian Custance, by this light,
 Though she had not her troth to Gawin Goodluck plight,
 Yet rather than with such a loutish dolt to marry,
 I dare say she would live a poor life solitary;
 But fain would I speak with Custance if I wist how
 To laugh at the matter. Yond cometh one forth now.

Tib. Talk.—(Entering.) Ah! that I might but once in my life
 have a sight

Of him that made us all so ill sent by this light.
He should never escape if I had him by the ear;
But even from his head I would bite it or tear.
Yea, and if one of them were not enow,
I would bite them both off, I make God a vow.

Merry.—What is he whom this little mouse doth so threaten?

Tib. Talk.—I would teach him, I trow, to make girls child or beaten.

Merry.—I will call her. Maid, with whom are ye so hasty?

Tib. Talk.—Not with you, sir, but with a little wag-pasty,
A deceiver of folks by subtle craft and guile.

Merry.—I know where she is: Dobinet hath wrought some wile.

Tib. Talk.—He brought a ring and token which he said was sent
From our dame's husband; but I wot well I was shent,
For it liked her as well, to tell you no lies,
As water in her ship, or salt cast in her eyes.
And yet whence it came neither we nor she can tell.

Merry.—We shall have sport anon; I like this very well.

And dwell ye here with Mistress Custance, fair maid?

Tib. Talk.—Yea, marry, do I, sir. What would ye have said?

Merry.—A little message unto her by word of mouth.

Tib. Talk.—No messages, by your leave, nor tokens, forsooth.

Merry.—Then help me to speak with her.

Tib. Talk.—With a good will that.

Here she cometh forth. Now speak ye know best what.

Custance.—(Entering.) No other life with you, maid, but
abroad to skip?

Tib. Talk.—Forsooth, here is one would speak with your mis-
tressship.

Custance.—Ah! have ye been learning of more messages now?

Tib. Talk.—I would not hear his mind, but bade him show it to
you.

Custance.—Get you indoors.

Tib. Talk.—I am gone.

Merry.—Dame Custance, God ye save!

Custance.—Welcome, friend Merrygreeke; and what thing
would ye have?

Merry.—I am come to you a little matter to break.

Custance.—But see it be honest, else better not to speak.

Merry.—How feel ye yourself affected here of late?

Custance.—I feel no manner change, but after the old rate.

But whereby do ye mean?

Merry.—Concerning marriage.

Doth not love lade you?

Custance.—I feel no such burden.

Merry.—Do ye feel no pangs of dotage? Answer me right.

Custance.—I dote so that I make but one sleep all the night;

But what need all these words?

Merry.—Oh, Jesus, will ye see

What dissembling creatures these same women be?

The gentleman ye wot of, whom ye do so love

That ye would fain marry him if ye durst it move,

Among other rich widows, which are of him glad,

Lest ye for losing of him, perchance, might run mad,

Is now contented that upon your suit making,

Ye be as one in election of taking.

Custance.—What a tale is this? That I wot of? Whom I love?

Merry.—Yea, and he is in loving as warm again as a dove.

E'en of very pity he is willing you to take,

Because ye shall not destroy yourself for his sake.

Custance.—Marry, God yield his worship, whatever he be,

It is gentlemanly spoken.

Merry.—Is it not, trow ye?

If ye have the grace now to offer yourself, ye speed.

Custance.—As much as though I did, this time it shall not need.

But what gentleman is it, I pray you tell me plain,

That wooeth so finely?

Merry.—Lo! where ye be again?

As though ye knew him not.

Custance.—Tush! ye speak in jest.

Merry.—Nay, sure, the party is in good knocking earnest,

And have you he will, he saith, and have you he must.

Custance.—I am promised during my life; that is just.

Merry.—Marry, so thinketh he, unto him alone.

Custance.—No creature hath my faith and troth but one;
That is Gawin Goodluck; and if it be not he,
He hath no title this way, whatever he be,
Nor I know none to whom I have such word spoken.

Merry.—Ye know him not? you, by his letter and token.

Custance.—Indeed, true it is that a letter I have,
But I never read it yet, as God me save.

Merry.—Ye a woman? and your letter so long unread?

Custance.—Ye may thereby know what haste I have to wed.
But now, who it is for my hand I know by guess.

Merry.—Ah, well, I say.

Custance.—It is Roister Doister, doubtless.

Merry.—Will ye never leave this dissimulation?
Ye know him not.

Custance.—But by imagination,
For no man there is but a very dolt and lout,
That to woo a widow would so go about.
He shall never have me his wife while he do live.

Merry.—Then will he have you if he may, so mote I thrive,
And he biddeth you send him word by me
That ye humbly beseech him ye his wife may be,
And that there shall be no let in you nor mistrust,
But to be wedded on Sunday next if he lust,
And biddeth you to look for him.

Custance.—Doth he bid so?

Merry.—When he cometh, ask him whether he did or no.

Custance.—Go say that I bid him keep him warm at home,
For if he come abroad, he shall cough me a mome. (A
fool.)

My mind was vexed, I shrew his head, sottish dolt.

Merry.—He hath in his head——

Custance.—As much brain as a burbolt.

Merry.—Well, Dame Custance, if he hear you thus play chop-
loge—— (logic.)

Custance.—What will he?

Merry.—Play the devil in the horologe.

Custance.—I defy him, lout!

Merry.—Shall I tell him what ye say?

Custance.—Yea, and add whatsoever thou canst, I thee pray,
And I will avouch it, whatsoever it be.

Merry.—Then let me alone; we will laugh well, ye shall see.
It will not be long ere he will hither resort.

Custance.—Let him come when he likes, I wish no better sport
Fare ye well; I will in and read my great letter.
I shall to my wooer make answer the better.

SCENE II.

Merry.—Now that the whole answer in my devise doth rest,
I shall paint out our wooer in colors of the best.
And all that I say shall be on Custance's mouth:
She is author of all that I shall speak, forsooth.
But yonder cometh Roister Doister now in a trance.

Roister.—Juno send me this day good luck and good chance.
I cannot but come see how Merrygreeke doth speed.

Merry.—(Aside.) I will not see him, but give him a jut indeed.
I cry your mastership mercy! (Running against him.)

Roister.—And whither now?

Merry.—As fast as I could run, sir, in post unto you.
But why speak ye so faintly, or why are ye so sad?

Roister.—Thou knowest the proverb, because I cannot be had.
Hast thou spoken with this woman?

Merry.—Yea, that I have.

Roister.—And what will this gear be?

Merry.—No, so God save me.

Roister.—Hast thou a flat answer?

Merry.—Nay, a sharp answer.

Roister.—What?

Merry.—Ye shall not, she saith, by her will marry her cat.
Ye are such a calf, such an ass, such a block,
Such a lilburne, such a hoball, such a lubber,
And because ye should come to her at no season,
She despised your worship out of all reason.

Beware what ye say, quoth I, of such a gentman.
 Nay, I fear him not, quoth she, do the best he can.
 He vaunteth himself for a man of prowess great,
 Whereas a good gander, I dare say, may him beat.
 And where he is louted and laughed to scorn
 For the veriest dolt that ever was born,
 And veriest lubber, sloven and beast
 Living in this world from the west to the east;
 Yet of himself hath he such opinion,
 That in all the world is not the like minion.
 He thinks every woman to be brought in dotage
 With the only sight of his goodly personage.
 Yet none that will have him; we do him lout and flock,
 And make him among us our common sporting stock;
 And so would I now, quoth she, save only because
 Better nay, quoth I, I lust not meddle with daws.
 Ye are happy, quoth I, that ye are a woman;
 This would cost you your life in case ye were a man.

Roister.—Yea, an hundred thousand pound should not save her life.

Merry.—No, but that ye woo her to have her to your wife,
 But I could not stop her mouth.

Roister.—Heigh-ho! alas!

Merry.—Be of good cheer, man, and let the world pass.

Roister.—What shall I do or say, now that it will not be?

Merry.—Ye shall have choice of a thousand as good as she.

And ye must pardon her; it is for lack of wit.

Roister.—Yea, for were not I an husband for her fit?

Well, what should I now do?

Merry.—In faith, I cannot tell.

Roister.—I will go home and die.

Merry.—Then shall I bid toll the bell?

Roister.—No.

Merry.—God have mercy on your soul, ah, good gentleman,

That ye should thus die for an unkind woman.

Will ye drink once ere ye go?

Roister.—No, no, I will none.

Merry.—How feel your soul to God?

Roister.—I am nigh gone.

Merry.—And shall we hence straight?

Roister.—Yea.

Merry.—Placebo dilexi.

Master Roister Doister will straight go home and die.

Roister.—Heigh-ho! alas! the pangs of death my heart do break.

Merry.—Hold your peace for shame, sir; a dead man may not speak.

Nequando: What mourners and what torches shall we have?

Roister.—None.

Merry.—Dirige. He will go darkling to his grave,
Neque lux, neque crux, neque mourners, neque clink,
He will steal to heaven unknowing to God, I think.
A porta inferi, who shall your goods possess?

Roister.—Thou shaft be my executor, and have all, more and less.

Merry.—Requiem æternam. Now, God reward your mastership.
And I will cry halfpenny dole for your worship.
Come forth, sirs; hear the doleful news I shall you tell.
Our good master here will no longer with us dwell,
But in spite of Custance, which hath him wearied,
Let us see his worship solemnly buried.
And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,
Some part of his funeral let us here begin.
All men take heed by this one gentleman,
How you set your love upon an unkind woman.
For these women be all such mad, peevish elves,
They will not be won except it please themselves.
But in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,
Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well.
And will ye needs go from us thus in very deed?

Roister.—Yea, in good sadness.

Merry.—Now, Jesus Christ be your speed.

Good-night, Roger, old knave; farewell, Roger, old knave;
Good-night, Roger, old knave, knave knap.
Pray for the late Master Roister Doister's soul,

And come forth, parish clerk, let the passing bell toll.
Pray for your master, sirs, and for him ring a peal.
He was your right good master while he was in heal.

Roister.—Heigh-ho!

Merry.—Dead men go not so fast
In Paradisum.

Roister.—Heigh-ho!

Merry.—Soft, hear what I have cast——

Roister.—I will hear nothing; I am past.

Merry.—Whough, wellaway.

Ye may tarry one hour and hear what I shall say.
Ye were best, sir, for a while to revive again,
And quit them ere ye go.

Roister.—Trowest thou so?

Merry.—Yea, plain.

Roister.—How may I revive, being now so far past?

Merry.—I will rub your temples, and fetch you again at last.

Roister.—It will not be possible.

Merry.—(Rubbing *Roister*'s temples.) Yes, for twenty pound.

Roister.—What dost thou?

Merry.—Fetch you again out of your sound.

By this cross ye were nigh gone indeed; I might feel
Your soul departing within an inch of your heel.
Now follow my counsel.

Roister.—What is it?

Merry.—If I were you,

Custance should oft seek to me ere I would bow.

Roister.—Well, as thou wilt have me, even so will I do.

Merry.—Then shall ye revive again for an hour or two.

Roister.—As thou wilt; I am content for a little space.

Merry.—Good hap is not hasty, yet in space cometh grace.

To speak with Custance yourself should be very well;
What good thereof may come, nor I nor you can tell.
But now the matter standeih upon your marriage,
Ye must now take unto you a lusty courage.
Ye may not speak with a faint heart to Custance,

But with a lusty breast and countenance,
That she may know she hath to answer to a man.

Roister.—Yes, I can do that as well as any can.

Merry.—Then, because ye must Custance face to face woo,
Let us see how to behave yourself ye can do.
Ye must have a portly brag, after your estate.

Roister.—Tush! I can handle that after the best rate.

Merry.—Well done! so lo, up man, with your head and chin;
Up with that snout, man; so lo, now ye begin;
So, that is somewhat like, but prank your coat, nay,
when!

That is a lusty brute! Hands under your side, man;
So lo, now is it even as it should be;
That is somewhat like for a man of your degree.
Then must ye stately go, jetting up and down.
Tut! can ye no better shake the tail of your gown?
There lo, such a lusty brag it is ye must make.

Roister.—To come behind and make curtsey, thou must some
pains take.

Merry.—Else were I much to blame, I thank your mastership,
The lord one day, all to begrime you with worship.
(Pushes violently against *Roister*.)

Back, sir sauce, let gentlefolks have elbow room!
Void, sirs; see ye not Master *Roister Doister* come?
Make place, my masters. (Knocks against him.)

Roister.—Thou jostlest now too nigh.

Merry.—Back, all rude louts!

Roister.—Tush!

Merry.—I cry your worship mercy.
Hoighdagh! if fair, fine Mistress Custance saw you now,
Ralph *Roister Doister* were her own, I warrant you.
But now one other thing more yet I think upon.

Roister.—Show what it is.

Merry.—A wooer, be he never so poor,
Must play and sing before his best belove's door,
How much more than you?

Roister.—Thou speakest well, out of doubt.

Merry.—And perchance that would make her the sooner come out.

Roister.—Go call my musicians; bid them hie apace.

Merry.—I will be here with them ere ye can say trey ace.

Roister.—This was well said of Merrygreeke; I allow his wit.

Before my sweetheart's door we will have a fit.

That if my love come forth, that I may with her talk,

I doubt not but this gear shall on my side walk.

But lo! how well Merrygreeke is returned since.

Merry.—(Returning with the musicians.) There hath grown no grass on my heels since I went hence.

Lo! here have I brought that shall make you pastance.

Roister.—Come, sirs, let us sing to win my dear love Custance.

(They sing.)

I mun be married a Sunday,
I mun be married a Sunday,
Whosoever shall come this way,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Roister Doister is my name,
Roister Doister is my name,
A lusty brute I am the same,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Christian Custance have I found,
Christian Custance have I found,
A widow worth a thousand pound,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Custance is as sweet as honey,
Custance is as sweet as honey,
I her lamb and she my coney,
I mun be married a Sunday.

When shall we make our wedding feast?
When shall we make our wedding feast?
There shall be cheer for man and beast,
I mun be married a Sunday.

Merry.—Lo! where she cometh, some countenance to her make,
And ye shall hear me be plain with her for your sake.

Custance.—(Entering.) What gauding and fooling is this afore my door?

Merry.—May not folks be honest, pray you, though they be poor?

Custance.—As that thing may be true, so rich folks may be fools.

Roister.—Her talk is as fine as she had learned in schools.

Merry.—Look partly toward her, and draw a little near.

Custance.—Get ye home, idle folks!

Merry.—Why may not we be here?

Nay, and ye will haze, haze; otherwise, I tell you plain,
And ye will not haze, then give us our gear again.

Custance.—Indeed I have of yours much gay things, God save all.

Roister.—Speak gently unto her, and let her take all.

Merry.—Ye are too tender-hearted: shall she make us daws?

Nay, dame, I will be plain with you in my friend's cause.

Roister.—Let all this pass, sweetheart, and accept my service.

Custance.—I will not be served with a fool in no wise;
When I choose an husband, I hope to take a man.

Merry.—And where will ye find one which can do that he can?
Now this man, toward you being so kind,
You not to make him an answer somewhat to his mind.

Custance.—I sent him a full answer by you, did I not?

Merry.—And I reported it.

Custance.—Nay, I must speak it again.

Roister.—No, no; he told it all.

Merry.—Was I not meetly plain?

Roister.—Yes.

Merry.—But I would not tell all, for, faith, if I had,
With you, Dame Custance, ere this hour it had been bad
And not without cause; for this goodly personage
Meant no less than to join with you in marriage.

Custance.—Let him waste no more labor nor suit about me.

Merry.—Ye know not where your preferment lieth, I see,
He sending you such a token, ring and letter.

Custance.—Marry, here it is; ye never saw a better.

Merry.—Let us see your letter.

Custance.—Hold! read it if ye can,

And see what letter it is to win a woman.

Merry.—(Reads.) To mine own dear coney bird, sweetheart
and pigsny,

Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by.

Of this superscription do ye blame the style?

Custance.—With the rest, as good stuff as ye read a great while.

Merry.—Sweet mistress, whereas I love you nothing at all,

Regarding your substance and riches chief of all,

For your personage, beauty, demeanor and wit

I commend me unto you never a whit.

Sorry to hear report of your good welfare;

For, as I hear say, such your conditions are,

That ye be worthy favor of no living man,

To be abhorred of every honest man.

To be taken for a woman inclined to vice.

Nothing at all to virtue giving her due price.

Wherefore, concerning marriage, ye are thought

Such a fine paragon as honest man ne'er bought.

And now by these presents I do you advertise

That I am minded to marry you in no wise.

For your goods and substance I could be content

To take you as ye are. If ye mind to be my wife,

Ye shall be assured, for the time of my life,

I will keep ye right well; from good raiment and fare

Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care.

Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty;

Do and say what ye lust, ye shall never please me;

But when ye are merry, I will be all sad;

When ye are sorry, I will be very glad;

When ye seek your heart's ease, I will be unkind;

At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find,

But all things contrary to your will and mind

Shall be done: otherwise I will not be behind

To speak. And as for all them that would do you wrong

I will so help and maintain, ye shall not live long.

Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you but I.

I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you till I die.
 Thus, good Mistress Custance, the Lord you save and
 keep

From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep,
 Who favo'reth you no less, ye may be bold,
 Than this letter purporteth which ye have unfold.

Custance.—How by this letter of love? Is it not fine?

Roister.—By the arms of Calais, it is none of mine.

Merry.—Fie! you are foul to blame; this is your own hand.

Custance.—Might not a woman be proud of such an husband?

Merry.—Ah, that ye would in a letter show such despite!

Roister.—Oh, I would I had him here the which did it indite!

Merry.—Why, ye made it yourself, ye told me, by this light.

Roister.—Yea, I meant I wrote it mine own self yesternight.

Custance.—I wis, sir, I would not have sent you such a mock.

Roister.—Ye may so take it, but I meant it not so, by cock!

Merry.—Who can blame this woman to fume and fret and rage?

Tut! tut! yourself now have marred your own marriage.

Well, Mistress Custance, if ye can this remit,

This gentleman otherwise may your love requite.

Custance.—No, God be with you both, and seek no more to me.
 (Exit.)

Roister.—Wough! she is gone forever; I shall her no more see.

Merry.—What, weep? Fie, for shame! And blubber? For
 manhood's sake,

Never let your foe so much pleasure of you take.

Rather play the man's part, and do love refrain.

If she despise you, e'en despise ye her again.

Roister.—By goss, and for thy sake I defy her indeed.

Merry.—Yea, and perchance that way ye shall much sooner
 speed;

For one mad property these women have in fee—

When ye will, they will not; will not ye, then will they.

Ah, foolish woman! ah, most unlucky Custance!

Ah, unfortunate woman! ah, peevish Custance!

Art thou to thine harms so obstinately bent,

That thou canst not see where lieth thine high preferment?

Canst thou not lub dis man, which could lub dee so well?
Art thou so much thine own foe?

Roister.—Thou dost the truth tell.

Merry.—Well I lament.

Roister.—So do I.

Merry.—Wherefore?

Roister.—For this thing.

Because she is gone.

Merry.—I mourn for another thing.

Roister.—What is it, Merrygreeke, wherefore thou dost grief take?

Merry.—That I am not a woman myself for your sake.

I would have you myself, and a straw for yon Gill,
And mock much of you, though it were against my will.
I would not, I warrant you, fall in such a rage
As to refuse such a goodly personage.

Roister.—In faith, I heartily thank thee, Merrygreeke.

Merry.—And I were a woman——

Roister.—Thou wouldst to me seek.

Merry.—For, though I say it, a goodly person ye be.

Roister.—No, no.

Merry.—Yes, a goodly man as ever I did see.

Roister.—No, I am a poor, homely man, as God made me.

Merry.—By the faith that I owe to God, sir, but ye be.

Would I might for your sake spend a thousand pound.

Roister.—I dare say thou wouldst have me to thy husband?

Merry.—Yes, and I were the fairest lady in the shire,

And knew you as I know you, and see you now here.

Well, I say no more.

Roister.—Gramercies! with all my heart.

Merry.—But since that cannot be, will ye play a wise part?

Roister.—How should I?

Merry.—Refrain from Custance a while now,

And I warrant her soon right glad to seek to you

Ye shall see her anon come on her knees creeping,
And pray you to be good to her salt tears weeping.

Roister.—But what and she come not?

Merry.—In faith, then farewell she.

Or else, if ye be wroth, ye may avenged be.

Roister.—By cocks precious potstick, and e'en so I shall.

I will utterly destroy her, and house and all,

But I would be avenged, in the mean space,

On that vile scribbler that did my wooing disgrace.

Merry.—Scribbler, quoth you; indeed he is worthy no less.

I will call him to you, and ye bid me, doubtless.

Roister.—Yes; for although he had as many lives

As a thousand widows and a thousand wives,

As a thousand lions and a thousand rats,

A thousand wolves and a thousand cats,

A thousand bulls and a thousand calves,

And a thousand legions divided in halves,

He shall never 'scape death on my sword's point,

Though I should be torn therefor joint by joint!

Merry.—Nay, if ye will kill him, I will not fetch him;

I will not in so much extremity set him;

He may yet amend, sir, and be an honest man;

Therefore pardon him, good soul, as much as ye can.

Roister.—Well, for thy sake, this once with his life he shall
pass;

But I will hew him all to pieces, by the mass.

Merry.—Nay, faith, ye shall promise that he shall no harm
have,

Else I will not fetch him.

Roister.—I shall so, God me save.

But I may chide him a good.

Merry.—Yea, that do hardly.

Roister.—Go, then.

Merry.—I return and bring him to you by and by.

In the next scene the Scrivener who penned the letter is introduced. Roister is about to attack him, but

Merrygreeke intervenes, when explanations are made which, it will be seen, turn on the punctuation.

Scrivener.—Well, what say ye to me, or else I will be gone.

Roister.—I say the letter thou madest me was not good.

Scrivener.—Then did ye wrong copy it, of likelihood.

Roister.—Yes, out of thy copy word for word I wrote.

Scrivener.—Then was it as ye prayed to have it, I wot,
But in reading and pointing there was made some fault.

Roister.—I wot not, but it made all my matter to halt.

Scrivener.—How say you—is this mine original or no?

Roister.—The selfsame that I wrote out of, so mote I go.

Scrivener.—Look you on your own fist, and I will look on this,
And let this man be judge whether I read amiss.
To mine own dear coney bird, sweetheart and pigsny,
Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by.
How now? Doth not this superscription agree?

Roister.—Read that is within, and there ye shall the fault see.

Scrivener.—Sweet mistress, whereas I love you, nothing at all
Regarding your riches and substance; chief of all
For your personage, beauty, demeanor and wit
I commend me unto you; never a whit
Sorry to hear report of your good welfare.
For, as I hear say, such your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favor; of no living man
To be abhorred; of every honest man
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice
Nothing at all; to virtue giving her due price.
Wherefore, concerning marriage, ye are thought
Such a fine paragon as honest man ne'er bought.
And now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you, in no wise
For your goods and substance; I can be content
To take you as you are; if ye will be my wife,
Ye shall be assured for the time of my life,
I will keep you right well; from good raiment and fare
Ye shall not be kept; but in sorrow and care

Ye shall in no wise live; at your own liberty,
 Do and say what ye lust; ye shall never please me
 But when ye are merry; I will be all sad
 When ye are sorry; I will be very glad
 When ye seek your heart's ease; I will be unkind
 At no time; in me shall ye much gentleness find.
 But all things contrary to your will and mind
 Shall be done otherwise; I will not be behind
 To speak. And as for all they that would do you wrong,
 I will so help and maintain ye, shall not live long.
 Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you, but I,
 I, who ere say nay, will stick by you till I die.
 Thus, good Mistress Custance, the Lord you save and
 keep.

From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep,
 Who favoresh you no less, ye may be bold,
 Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold.
 Now, sir, what default can ye find in this letter?

Roister.—Of truth, in my mind, there cannot be a better.

Scrivener.—Then was the fault in reading, and not in writing,
 No, nor I dare say, in the form of inditing.
 But who read this letter, that it sounded so naught?

Merry.—I read it, indeed.

Scrivener.—Ye read it not as ye ought.

Roister.—Why, thou wretched villain, was all this same fault in
 thee? (Offers to strike.)

Merry.—(Strikes Roister.) I knock your costard if ye offer to
 strike me.

Roister.—Strikest thou indeed? and I offered but in jest?

Merry.—Yea, and rap you again, except ye can sit in rest.
 And I will no longer tarry here, me believe.

Roister.—What! wilt thou be angry, and I do thee forgive?
 Fare thou well, scribbler, I cry thee mercy indeed.

Scrivener.—Fare ye well, bibbler, and worthily may ye speed.

Mistress Custance is sore beset by her clumsy suitor,
 who, guided by Merrygreeke, takes every opportunity
 to change her mind. He addresses her servant:

Roister.— Tell thy maister Goodluck
That he cometh too late of this blossom to pluck.
Let him keep him there still, or at leastwise make no
haste,
As for his labor hither he shall spend in waste.
His betters be in place now.

Merry.—(Aside.) As long as it will hold.

Custance.—I will be even with thee, thou beast, thou mayst be
bold.

Roister.—Will ye have us, then?

Custance.—I will never have thee.

Roister.—Then will I have you!

Custance.—No, the devil shall have thee.

I have gotten this hour more shame and harm by thee
Than all thy life days thou canst do me honesty.

Merry.—(To *Roister*.) Why, now may ye see what it cometh
to in the end,

To make a deadly foe of your most loving friend.

(To *Custance*.) And this letter, if ye would hear it
now——

Custance.—I will hear none of it.

Merry.—In faith, would ravish you.

Custance.—He hath stained my name forever, this is clear.

Roister.—I can make all as well in an hour——

Custance.—I defy him.

Merry.—At my word?

Custance.—A shame take him.

Waste no more wind, for it will never be.

Merry.—This one fault with twain shall be mended, ye shall see.
Gentle Mistress Custance now, good Mistress Custance,
Honey Mistress Custance now, sweet Mistress Custance,
Golden Mistress Custance now, white Mistress Custance,
Silken Mistress Custance now, fair Mistress Custance.

Custance.—Faith, rather than to marry with such a doltish lout,
I would match myself with a beggar, out of doubt.
Speak not of winning me, for it shall never be so.

Roister.—Yes, dame, I will have you whether ye will or no.

I command you to love me; wherefore should ye not?

Is not my love to you chafing and burning hot?

Merry.—To her; that is well said!

Roister.—Shall I so break my brain

To dote upon you, and ye not love us again?

Merry.—Well said yet.

Custance.—Go to, you goose.

Merry.—Well, sir, ye perceive,

For all your kind offer, she will not you receive.

Roister.—Then a straw for her, and a straw for her again;

She shall not be my wife, would she never so fain,

No, an though she would be at ten thousand pound cost.

Merry.—Lo! dame, ye may see what a husband ye have lost.

Custance.—Yea, no force, a jewel much better lost than found.

Merry.—Ah, ye will not believe how this doth my heart wound.

How should a marriage between you be toward,

If both parties draw back and become so froward?

Roister.—(Threatening.) Nay, dame, I will fire thee out of thy house,

And destroy thee and all thine, and that by and by!

Merry.—Nay, for the passion of God, sir, do not so.

Roister.—Yes, except she will say yea to that she said no.

Custance.—And what! be there no officers, trow we, in town

To check idle loiterers, bragging up and down?

Where be they by whom vagabonds should be repressed,

That poor, simple widows might live in peace and rest?

Shall I never rid thee out of my company?

I will call for help. What ho! come forth, Trupenie!

Trupenie.—(Entering.) Anon. What is your will, mistress?

Did ye call me?

Custance.—Yea, go run apace, and as fast as may be,

Pray Tristram Trusty, my most assured friend,

To be here by and by, that he may me defend.

Trupenie.—That message quickly shall be done, by God's grace.

(Exft.)

Custance.—Then shall we see, I trow, whether ye shall do me harm.

Roister.—Yes, in faith, Kit, I shall thee and thine so charm,
That all women incarnate by thee may beware.

Custance.—Nay, as for charming me, come hither if thou dare!
I shall clout thee till thou stink, both thee and thy train,
And coyle thee mine own hands, and send thee home
again.

Roister.—Yea, sayst thou me that, dame? dost thou me threaten?
Go we; I still see whether I shall be beaten.

Merry.—Nay, by the death of Christ, let me now treat peace,
For bloodshed will there be in case this strife increase.
Ah, good Dame Custance, take better way with you.

Custance.—Let him do his worst. (She drives them to retreat.)

Mistress Custance reviews her little army in the next scene.

Custance.—So, sirrah! if I should not with him take this way,
I should not be rid of him, I think, till doomsday.
I will call forth my folks, that without any mocks,
If he come again, we may give him raps and knocks.
Madge Mumblecrust, come forth, and Tibet Talkapace.
Yea, and come forth, too, Mistress Annot Alyface.

(Enter the maids.)

Custance.—Like warriors, if need be, ye must show your
strength.

The man that this day hath thus beguiled you
Is Ralph Roister Doister, whom ye know well enow—
The most lout and dastard that ever on ground trod.

Tib. Talk.—I see all folk mock him when he goeth abroad.

Custance.—What, pretty maid? will ye talk when I speak?

Tib. Talk.—No, forsooth, good mistress.

Custance.—Will ye my tale break?

He threateneth to come hither with all his force to fight.
I charge you, if he come, on him with all your might.

Mumbl.—I with my distaff will reach him one rap.

Tib. Talk.—And I with my new broom will sweep him one swap,
And then with our great club I will reach him one rap.

An. Alyface.—And I with our skimmer will fling him one flap.

Tib. Talk.—Then Trupenie's firefork will him shrewdly fray,
And you with the spit may drive him quite away.

Custance.—Go, make all ready, that it may be e'en so.

Tib. Talk.—For my part, I shrew them that last about it go.

In the grand siege by Roister of Mistress Custance's domestic fort, Merrygreeke manages to damage Roister and aid her cause, which is victorious. But Gawin Goodluck has heard from Suresby some doubtful stories of his faithful wife. All ends well in the fifth act.

Custance.—I come forth to see and hearken for news good,
For about this hour is the time, of likelihood,
That Gawin Goodluck, by the sayings of Suresby,
Would be at home. And lo! yond I see him I.
What, Gawin Goodluck! the only hope of my life!
Welcome home! and kiss me, your true espoused wife.

Goodluck.—Nay, soft, Dame Custance; I must first, by your
license,
See whether all things be clear in your conscience.
I hear of your doings to me very strange.

Custance.—What fear ye? that my faith toward you should
change?

Good.—I must needs mistrust ye be elsewhere entangled.
For I hear that certain men with you have wrangled
About the promise of marriage by you to them made.

Custance.—Could any man's report your mind therein persuade?

Good.—Well, ye must therein declare yourself to stand clear,
Else I and you, Dame Custance, may not join this year.

Custance.—Then would I were dead, and fair laid in my grave.
Ah, Suresby, is this the honesty that ye have?
To hurt me with your report, not knowing the thing?

Sim Suresby.—If ye be honest, my words can hurt you nothing.
But what I heard and saw, I might not but report.

Custance.—Ah, Lord help poor widows, destitute of comfort!

Truly, most dear spouse, naught was done but for pastance.

Good.—But such kind of sporting is homely dalliance.

Custance.—If ye knew the truth, ye would take all in good part.

Good.—By your leave, I am not half well skilled in that art.

Custance.—It was none but Roister Doister, that foolish mome.

Good.—Yea, Custance, better, they say, a bad excuse than none.

Custance.—Why, Tristram Trustie, sir, your true and faithful friend,

Was privy both to the beginning and the end.

Let him be the judge, and for me testify.

Good.—I will the more credit that he shall verify,

And because I will the truth know, e'en as it is,

I will to him myself, and know all without miss.

Come on, Sim Suresby, that before my friend thou may

Avouch the same words which thou didst to me say.

The next scene opens with a soliloquy.

Custance.—O Lord, how necessary it is nowadays,

That everybody live uprightly all manner of ways!

For let never so little a gap be open,

And be sure of this, the worst shall be spoken.

How innocent stand I in this for deed or thought,

And yet see what mistrust toward me it hath wrought.

But thou, Lord, knowest all folks' thoughts and eke intents,

And thou art the deliverer of all innocents.

Thou didst help the adulteress that she might be amended;

Much more, then, help, Lord, that never ill intended.

Thou didst help Susanna, wrongfully accused,

And no less dost thou see, Lord, how I am now abused.

Thou didst help Hester, when she should have died.

Help also, good Lord, that my truth may be tried.

Yet if Gawin Goodluck with Tristram Trustie speak,

I trust of ill report the force shall be but weak.

And lo! yond they come, sadly talking together.
I will abide, and not shrink for their coming hither.

The slanders are disproved; Goodluck hies to his spouse.

Good.—Sweet Custance, neither heart can think nor tongue tell
How much I joy in your constant fidelity.

Come, now, kiss me, the pearl of perfect honesty.

Custance.—God let me no longer to continue in life
Than I shall toward you continue a true wife.

Good.—Well, now to make you for this some part of amends,
I shall desire first you, and then such of our friends
As shall to you seem best, to sup at home with me,
Where at your fought field we shall laugh and merry be.

The play ends with good cheer, and though she at first protests, Mistress Custance is persuaded by her husband to include Roister Doister and Merrygreeke in the company, to make their sport more piquant.

EDWARD THE SECOND

SCENES FROM A TRAGEDY

BY

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

Marlowe's *Edward II* was long considered the masterpiece among the historic dramas of the Elizabethan era, being preferred to Shakespeare's plays, not even excepting his *Richard III* and *King John*. It is in truth a powerful drama, though one tires of the character of Gaveston as much as did the nobles among whom he lived; and we are not sorry when one of them puts him out of the way. Only a few of the best passages are given, as the piece is too long to be presented in full.

"The death-scene of Marlowe's king," "moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted." So wrote Charles Lamb of this powerful play; but first Gaveston, newly returned from France, describes the pleasures in which the king takes most delight. These, it will be seen, are purely of the sensuous type; for the intellectual faculties of Edward II were never highly developed; nor were they, indeed, capable of such development.

Gaveston.—I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant King which way I please.
Music and poetry are his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like Sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;
My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antick hay.
Sometimes a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive tree
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring, and there hard by,
One like Acteon, peeping thro' the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transform'd,
And running in the likeness of an hart,

By yelping hounds pull'd down, shall seem to die;
Such things as these best please his majesty.

The younger Mortimer repines at the insolence of Gaveston.

Mortimer, Sr.—Nephew, I must to Scotland, thou stay'st here.

Leave now to oppose thyself against the King.

Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,

And seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,

Let him without controlment have his will.

The mightiest kings have had their minions:

Great Alexander lov'd Hephestion;

The conquering Hercules for his Hilar wept,

And for Patroclus stern Achilles droop'd.

And not kings only, but the wisest men;

The Roman Tully lov'd Octavius;

Grave Socrates wild Alcibiades.

Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible,

And promiseth as much as we can wish,

Freely enjoy that vain light-headed earl,

For riper years will wean him from such toys.

Mortimer, Jr.—Uncle, his wanton humor grieves not me;

But this I scorn, that one so basely born,

Should by his sovereign's favor grow so pert,

And riot with the treasure of the realm.

While soldiers mutiny for want of pay,

He wears a lord's revenue on his back,

And Midas-like, he jets it in the court,

With base outlandish cullions at his heels,

Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show,

As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appear'd.

I have not seen a dapper jack so brisk;

He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,

Larded with pearl, and in his Tuscan cap

A jewel of more value than the crown.

While others walk below, the king and he,

From out a window, laugh at such as we

And flout our train, and jest at our attire.

Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient.

The Barons reproach the King with the calamities which the realm endures from the ascendancy of his wicked favorite Gaveston.

King Edward, Lancaster, Warwick. The Mortimers and other Lords.

Mortimer, Jr.—Nay, stay, my lord, I come to bring you news.
Mine uncle is taken prisoner by the Scots.

Edward.—Then ransom him.

Lancaster.—'Twas in your wars, you should ransom him.

Mort., Jr.—And you shall ransom him, or else——

Kent.—What, Mortimer, you will not threaten him?

Edw.—Quiet yourself, you shall have the broad seal,
To gather for him throughout the realm.

Lan.—Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this.

Mort., Jr.—My Lord, the family of the Mortimers
Are not so poor, but would they sell their land,
Could levy men enough to anger you.
We never beg, but use such prayers as these.

Edw.—Shall I still be haunted thus?

Mort., Jr.—Nay, now you are here alone, I'll speak my mind.

Lun.—And so will I, and then, my lord, farewell.

Mort.—The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows,
And prodigal gifts bestow'd on Gaveston,
Have drawn thy treasure dry, and made thee weak;
The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.

Lan.—Look for rebellion, look to be depos'd;
Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
And lame and poor lie groaning at the gates.
The wild Oneye, with swarms of Irish kerns,
Live uncontrol'd within the English pale.
Unto the walls of York the Scots make road,
And unresisted draw away rich spoils.

Mort., Jr.—The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,
While in the harbor ride thy ships unrigg'd.

Lan.—What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?

Mort.—Who loves thee, but a sort of flatterers?

Lan.—Thy gentle queen, sole sister to Valoys,
Complains that thou hast left her all forlorn.

Mort.—Thy court is naked, being bereft of those,
That make a king seem glorious to the world:
I mean the peers, whom thou shouldst dearly love.
Libels are cast against thee in the street:
Ballads and rhimes made of thy overthrow.

Lan.—The Northern brothers seeing their houses burnt,
Their wives and children slain, run up and down
Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston.

Mort.—When wert thou in the field with banner spread?
But once: and then thy soldiers march'd like players,
With garish robes, not armor; and thyself,
Bedaub'd with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favors hung like labels down.

Lan.—And thereof came it, that the fleeing Scots,
To England's high disgrace, have made this jig:
Maids of England, sore may you moorn,
For your lemmons you have lost at Bennock's born
With a heave and a ho.
What weened the King of England,
So soon to have wooed Scotland,
With a rombellow?

Mort.—Wigmore shall fly to set my uncle free.

Lan.—And when 'tis gone, our swords shall purchase more.
If ye be mov'd, revenge it as you can;
Look next to see us with our ensigns spread.

(Exeunt Nobles.)

The King, being deposed, surrenders his crown into the hands
of the Bishop of Winchester and the Earl of Leicester at
Kenilworth Castle.

Leicester.—Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament,
Imagine Killingworth castle were your court,
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,
Not of compulsion or necessity.

Edward.—Leister, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eas'd my sorrows;

For kind and loving hast thou always been.
 The griefs of private men are soon allay'd,
 But not of kings. The forest deer being struck,
 Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
 But when the imperial lion's flesh is gor'd,
 He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
 And highly scorning that the lowly earth
 Should drink his blood, mounts up to th' air.
 And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
 Th' ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
 And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,
 That thus hath pent and mew'd me in a prison:
 For such outrageous passions claw my soul,
 As with the wings of rancor and disdain
 Full oft am I soaring up to high heav'n,
 To 'plain me to the gods against them both.
 But when I call to mind I am a king,
 Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs
 That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
 But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
 But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
 My nobles rule, I bear the name of king;
 I wear the crown, but am controll'd by them,
 By Mortimer, and my unconstant queen,
 Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;
 Whilst I am lodg'd within this cave of care,
 Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
 To company my heart with sad laments,
 That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.
 But tell me, must I now resign my crown?
 To make usurping Mortimer a king?

Bishop.—Your grace mistakes, it is for England's good,
 And princely Edward's right, we crave the crown.

Edw.—No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head;
 For he's a lamb, encompassed by wolves,
 Which in a moment will abridge his life.
 But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown,
 Heav'ns turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire,
 Or like the snaky wreath of Tisiphon,
 Engirt the temples of his hateful head:

So shall not England's vines be perished,
But Edward's name survive, though Edward dies.

Lei.—My lord, why waste you thus the time away?

They stay your answer, will you yield your crown?

Edw.—Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook
To lose my crown and kingdom without cause;
To give ambitious Mortimer my right,
That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss,
In which extreme my mind here murder'd is.
But what the heav'ns appoint, I must obey.
Here, take my crown; the life of Edward too;
Two Kings in England cannot reign at once—
But stay awhile, let me be king till night,
That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;
So shall my eyes receive their last content,
My head the latest honor due to it,
And jointly both yield up their wished right.
Continue ever, thou celestial sun;
Let never silent night possess this clime;
Stand still, you watches of the element;
All times and seasons, rest you at a stay,
That Edward may be still fair England's king.
But day's bright beam doth vanish fast away,
And needs I must resign my wished crown;
Inhuman creatures! nurs'd with tiger's milk!
Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow?
My diadem I mean, and guiltless life.
See, monsters, see, I'll wear my crown again.
What, fear you not the fury of your king?
But, hapless Edward, thou art fondly led,
They pass not for thy frowns as late they did,
But seek to make a new-elected king;
Which fills my mind with strange despairing thoughts,
Which thoughts are martyred with endless torments,
And in this torment comfort find I none,
But that I feel the crown upon my head;
And therefore let me wear it yet awhile.

Messenger.—My lord, the parliament must have present news,
And therefore say, will you resign or no?

Edw.—I'll not resign! but whilst I live be king.

Traitors be gone, and join with Mortimer.
Elect, conspire, install, do what you will;
Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries!

Bish.—This answer we'll return, and so farewell.

Lei.—Call them again, my lord, and speak them fair;
For if they go, the prince shall lose his right.

Edw.—Call thou them back, I have no power to speak.

Lei.—My lord, the king is willing to resign.

Bish.—If he be not, let him choose.

Edw.—O would I might! but heav'n and earth conspire
To make me miserable! here, receive my crown;
Receive it? no, these innocent hands of mine
Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.
He of you all that most desires my blood,
And will be called the murderer of a king,
Take it. What, are you mov'd? pity you me?
Then send for unrelenting Mortimer,
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turn'd to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.
Yet stay, for rather than I will look on them.
Here, here; now sweet God of heav'n,
Make me despise this transitory pomp,
And sit for ever inthroniz'd in heav'n!
Come death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,
Or, if I live, let me forget myself.

Berkley Castle. The King is left alone with Lightborn, a murderer.

Edward.—Who's there? what light is that? wherefore com'st thou?

Lightborn.—To comfort you, and bring you joyful news.

Edw.—Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.
Villain, I know thou com'st to murder me.

Light.—To murder you, my most gracious lord!
Far is it from my heart to do you harm.
The queen sent me to see how you were used,
For she relents at this your misery;

And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears,
To see a king in this most piteous state.

Edw.—Weep'st thou already? list a while to me
And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,
Or as Matrevis, hewn from the Caucasus,
Yet will it melt, ere I have done my tale.
This dungeon where they keep me is a sink
Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

Light.—O villains!

Edw.—And there, in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space; and lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually upon a drum.
They give me bread and water, being a king;
So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
My mind's distemper'd, and my body's numb'd,
And whether I have limbs or no, I know not.
O would my blood drop out from every vein,
As doth this water from my tattered robes.
Tell Isabel the queen, I look'd not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhors'd the duke of Cleremont.

Light.—O speak no more, my lord! this breaks my heart.
Lie on this bed, and rest yourself awhile.

Edw.—These looks of thine can harbor naught but death!
I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
Yet stay awhile, forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more stedfast on my God.

Light.—What means your highness to mistrust me thus?

Edw.—What mean'st thou to dissemble with me thus?

Light.—These hands were never stained with innocent blood,
Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.

Edw.—Forgive my thought, for having such a thought.
One jewel have I left, receive thou this.
Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,
But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
O if thou harbor'st murder in thy heart,

Let the gift change thy mind, and save thy soul.
 Know that I am a king; Oh, at that name.
 I feel a hell of grief. Where is my crown?
 Gone, gone, and do I still remain alive?

Light.—You're overwatch'd, my lord, lie down and rest.

Edw.—But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep;
 For not these ten days have these eyelids closed.
 Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear
 Open again. O wherefore sitt'st thou here?

Light.—If you mistrust me, I'll be gone, my lord.

Edw.—No, no, for if thou mean'st to murder me,
 Thou wilt return again; and therefore stay.

Light.—He sleeps.

Edw.—O let me not die; yet stay, O stay awhile.

Light.—How now, my lord?

Edw.—Something still buzzeth in mine ears,
 And tells me if I sleep I never wake;
 This fear is that which makes me tremble thus.
 And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come?

Light.—To rid thee of thy life; Matrevis, come.

Edw.—I am too weak and feeble to resist:
 Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul.

* * * * *

Except perhaps for *Tamburlaine the Great*, the tragedy of *Edward II* ranks as Marlowe's masterpiece, and in this, says one of his critics, "Marlowe has come nearer, by many degrees, to Shakespeare than any of his other predecessors have ever come near to Marlowe. The scene of the King's deposition at Kenilworth is almost as much finer in tragic effect and poetic quality as it is shorter and less elaborate than the corresponding scene in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. The terror of the death-scene undoubtedly rises into horror; but this horror is, with skillful simplicity of treatment, preserved

from passing into disgust." Here our commendation must cease; for the characters excite no greater sympathy or interest than is caused by the mere unfolding of events or display of passion,—except in the scene of the deposition—and are rather animal than spiritual in their outburst of rage or depth of emotion. The true balance of cause and effect, the real note of scenic harmony is not yet struck with the accuracy of touch and the perfect security of a master-hand. Nevertheless, in *Edward II* is a vast improvement on the historical dramas that preceded it, and there are occasional scenes and passages that explain to us why, in its day, it was preferred to the historic masterpieces of Shakespeare; as also, it may be added, were the "Interludes" of John Lilly and the comedies of Ben Jonson.

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS

A COMEDY

BY

PHILIP MASSINGER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR GILES OVERREACH.

LORD LOVELL.

WELLBORN.

MARRALL.

ALLWORTH.

JUSTICE GREEDY.

PARSON WILLDO.

AMBLE.

ORDER.

FURNACE.

WATCHALL.

VINTNER.

TAILOR.

LADY ALLWORTH.

FROTH.

MARGARET.

TABITHA.

ABIGAIL.

PRELUDE.

Of all Massinger's plays, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is the only one that has held the stage; and that solely through the strength of its leading character, Sir Giles Overreach. From the first appearance of the comedy, in 1633, until the present time, the part has been in favor with some of the foremost actors of successive generations, such men as Garrick, John Kemble, Edmund Kean and Junius Brutus Booth. Apart from Sir Giles, the personages are purely of the conventional type, and contrast somewhat feebly with the rich life of Shakespeare's youthful lovers and reckless scapegraces. But the plot is ingenious and effective, and in the "compound of the lion and the fox," as Sir Giles has been termed, is perhaps the most powerful presentment of the stage villain ever given to the world.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Village. Wellborn discovered, with a large rough stick, in tattered apparel, knocking at the alehouse door. Tapwell and Froth come from the house.

Wellborn.—No credit, nor no liquor?

Tapwell.—Not a suck, sir;

Nor the remainder of a single can,

Left by a drunken porter.

Froth.—Not the dropping of the tap for your morning's draught, sir:

'Tis verity, I assure you.

Well.—Verity, you brache!

The devil turned precisian? Rogue, what am I?

Tap.—Troth, durst I trust you with a looking-glass
To let you see your trim shape, you would quit me,
And take the name yourself.

Well.—How? dog! (Raising his cudgel.)

Tap.—Advance if you dare!

There dwells, and within call, if it please your worship,
A potent monarch, called the constable,
That does command a citadel, called the stocks,
Whose guards are certain files of rusty billmen,
Such as with great dexterity will hale
Your threadbare, tattered—

Well.—Rascal! slave!

Froth.—No rage, sir.

Tap.—At his own peril! Do not put yourself
In too much heat, there being no water near
To quench your thirst; and other drink, I take it,
You must no more remember; not in a dream, sir.

Well.—Why, thou unthankful villain, dar'st thou talk thus?
Is not thy house, and all thou hast, my gift?

Tap.—I find it not in chalk; and Timothy Tapwell
Does keep no other register.

Well.—Am not I he

Whose riots fed and clothed thee? Wert thou not
Born on my father's land, and proud to be
A drudge in his house?

Tap.—What I was, sir, it skills not;

What you are, is apparent; but, since you
Talk of father, in my hope it will torment you,
I'll briefly tell your story. Your dead father,
Old Sir John Wellborn,
My quondam master, was a man of worship;
Bore the whole sway of the shire, kept a great house,
Relieved the poor, and so forth; but, he dying,

And his estate coming to you,
Late Master Francis, but now forlorn Wellborn—

Well.—Slave, stop! or I shall lose myself.

Froth.—Very hardly;

You cannot out of your way.

Tap.—You were then a lord of acres, the prime gallant,
And I your under butler.

You had a merry time of't; hawks and hounds,
With choice of running horses: mistresses,
And other such extravagances: which
Your uncle, Sir Giles Overreach, observing,
Resolving not to lose the opportunity,
On statutes, mortgages, and binding bonds,
A while supplied your folly, and, having got
Your land, then left you.

Well.—Some curate hath penned this invective, mongrel,
And you have studied it.

Tap.—I've not done yet;

Your land gone, and your credit not worth a token,
You grew the common borrower; no man 'scaped you;
While poor Tim Tapwell, with a little stock,
Some forty pounds or so, bought a small cottage;
Humbled myself to marriage with my Froth here—

Well.—Hear me, ungrateful hell-hound! Did not I
Make purses for you? Then you licked my boots,
And thought your holiday cloak too coarse to clean 'em.
'Twas I, that, when I heard thee swear if ever
Thou could'st arrive at forty pounds, thou would'st
Live like an emperor; 'twas I that gave it
In ready gold. Deny this, wretch!

Tap.—I must, sir!

For, from the tavern to the taphouse, all,
On forfeiture of their licenses, stand bound
Ne'er to remember who their best guests were,
If they grew poor, like you.

Well.—They're well rewarded,
That beggar themselves to make such rascals rich.
Thou viper, thankless viper!
But, since you're grown forgetful, I will help

Your memory, and tread you into mortar;
Not leave one bone unbroken. (Beats him.)

Tap.—Oh! Oh! Oh!

Froth.—Help, help!—

Enter Allworth.

Allworth.—Hold, for my sake, hold!

Deny me, Frank? They are not worth your anger.

Well.—For once, thou hast redeemed them from this sceptre.
But let 'em vanish;—

Nay, if you grumble, I revoke my pardon.

(Wellborn and Allworth talk apart.)

Froth.—This comes of your prating, husband.

Tap.—Patience, Froth;

There's law to cure our bruises.

(Exeunt Tapwell and Froth into the alehouse.)

Well.—Sent to your mother?

All.—My lady, Frank, my patroness, my ali!

She's such a mourner for my father's death,

And, in her love to him, so favors me,

I cannot pay too much observance to her:

There are few such stepdames.

Well.—'Tis a noble widow,

And keeps her reputation pure and clear.

But, 'pr'ythee, tell me,

Has she no suitors?

All.—E'en the best of the shire, Frank,

My lord excepted: such as sue and send

And send and sue again: but to no purpose.

Their frequent visits have not gained her presence;

Yet she's so far from sullenness and pride,

That I dare undertake, you shall meet from her

A liberal entertainment.

Well.—I doubt it not. Now, Allworth, listen to me,

And mark my counsel: I am bound to give it.

Thy father was my friend; and that affection

I bore to him, in right descends to thee;

I will not have the least affront stick on thee,

If I with any danger can prevent it.

All.—I thank your noble care: but, pray you, in what
Do I run the hazard?

Well.—Art thou not in love?
Put it not off with wonder.

All.—In love?

Well.—You think you walk in clouds, but are transparent.
I've heard all, and the choice that you have made;
And, with my finger, can point out the north star
By which the loadstone of your folly's guided;
And, to confirm this true, what think you of
Fair Margaret, the only child and heir
Of cormorant Overreach? Dost blush and start
To hear her only named? Blush at your want
Of wit and reason.

All.—Howe'er you have discovered my intents,
You know my aims are lawful; and, if ever
The queen of flowers, the boast of spring, the rose,
Sprang from an envious briar, I may infer
There's such disparity in their conditions,
Between the goddess of my soul, the daughter,
And the base churl, her father.

Well.—Grant this true,
As I believe it, can'st thou ever hope
To enjoy a quiet bed with her, whose father
Ruined thy state?

All.—And yours, too.

Well.—I confess it, Allworth.
Or can'st thou think, if self-love blind thee not,
That Sir Giles Overreach, who, to make her great
In swelling titles, without touch of conscience
Will cut his neighbor's throat—and, I hope, his own,
too—
Will e'er consent to make her thine? Give o'er,
And think of some course suitable to thy rank,
And prosper in it.

All.—You have well advised me.
But, in the meantime, you, that are so studious
Of my affairs, wholly neglect your own.
Remember yourself, and in what plight you are.

Well.—No matter, no matter.

All.—Yes, 'tis much material:

You know my fortune, and my means; yet something
I can spare from myself to help your wants.

(Offers him money.)

Well.—How's this?

All.—Nay, be not angry.

Well.—Money from thee?

From a boy? one that lives
At the devotion of a stepmother,
And the uncertain favor of a lord?
I'll eat my arms first. Howsoe'er, blind Fortune
Hath spent the utmost of her malice on me,
Though I am rudely thrust out of an alehouse,
And thus accoutered—know not where to eat,
Or drink, or sleep, but underneath this canopy—
Although I thank thee, I disdain thy offer.
No—as I, in my madness, broke my state,
Without th' assistance of another's brain,
In my right wits, I'll piece it; at the worst,
Die thus, and be forgotten.

All.—Fare thee well.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

A hall in Lady Allworth's house. Amble, Order, Furnace
and Watchall.

Order.—Set all things right; or, as my name is Order,
And by this staff of office, that commands you,
This chain and double ruff, symbols of power,
Whoever misses in his function,
For one whole week makes forfeiture of his breakfast
And privilege in the wine-cellar.

Watchall.—You are merry,
Good Master Steward.

Furnace.—Let him; I'll be angry.

Amble.—Why, fellow Furnace, 'tis not twelve o'clock yet,
Nor dinner taken up; then, 'tis allowed,
Cooks, by their places, may be choleric.

Fur.—You think you've spoken wisely, goodman Ambler,
My lady's go-before.

Ord.—Nay, nay, no wrangling.

Fur.—Twit me with the authority of the kitchen!
At all hours, and all places, I'll be angry:
And, thus provoked, when I am at my prayers
I will be angry.

Amb.—There was no hurt meant.

Fur.—I'm friends with thee; and yet I will be angry.

Wat.—With whom?

Fur.—No matter whom; yet, now I think on't,
I'm angry with my lady.

Amb.—Heaven forbid, man!

Ord.—What cause has she given thee?

Fur.—Cause enough, master Steward.
I was entertained by her to please her palate,
And till she forswore eating, I performed it.
Now, since our master, noble Allworth, died,
Though I crack my brains to find out tempting sauces,
When I am three parts roasted,
And the fourth part parboiled, to prepare her viands,
She keeps her chamber, dines with a panada,
Or water-gruel, my sweat never thought on.

Ord.—But your art is seen in the dining-room.

Fur.—By whom?

By such as pretend love to her; but come
To feed upon her. Yet, of all the harpies
That do devour her, I am out of charity
With none so much as the thin-gutted squire
That's stolen into commission.

Ord.—Justice Greedy?

Fur.—The same, the same. Meat's cast away upon him;
It never thrives. He holds this paradox:
Who eats not well, can ne'er do justice well.
His stomach's as insatiate as the grave.

(A knocking without.)

Wat.—One knocks.

(Exit.)

Ord.—Our late young master!

Enter Watchall and Allworth, saluting them.

Wat.—Welcome, sir.

Fur.—You're welcome:

If you've a stomach, a cold bake-meat's ready.

Ord.—His father's picture in little.

Amb.—We are all your servants.

All.—At once my thanks to all.

This is yet some comfort. Is my lady stirring?

Ord.—Her presence answers for us.

Enter Lady Allworth, Abigail and Tabitha.

Lady Allworth.—Sort those silks well.

I'll take the air alone: (Exeunt Tabitha and Abigail.)

And, as I gave directions, if this morning

I'm visited by any, entertain 'em

As heretofore; but say, in my excuse,

I'm indisposed.

Ord.—We shall, madam.

Lady A.—Do, and leave me.

(Exeunt Watchall, Furnace, Order and Amble.)

Nay, stay you, Allworth. Tell me, how is't with

Your noble master?

All.—Ever like himself:

No scruple lessened in the full weight of honor.

He did command me—pardon my presumption—

As his unworthy deputy, to kiss

Your ladyship's fair hands.

Lady A.—I'm honored in

His favor to me. Does he hold his purpose

For the Low Countries?

All.—Constantly, good madam:

But will, in person, first present his service.

Lady A.—And how approve you of his course? you're yet,

Like virgin parchment, capable of any

Inscription, vicious or honorable:

I will not force your will, but leave you free

To your own election.

All.—Any form you please

I will put on, but—might I make my choice—
With humble emulation, I would follow
The path my lord marks to me.

Lady A.—'Tis well answered,

And I commend your spirit: your father, Allworth,
My ever-honored husband, some few hours
Before the will of heaven took him from me,
Did recommend you by the dearest ties
Of perfect love between us, to my charge:
And, therefore, when I speak, you are bound to hear
With such respect as if he lived in me.

All.—I have found you,

Most honored madam, more than a mother to me;
And, with my utmost strength of care and service,
Will labor that you never may repent
Your bounties showered upon me.

Lady A.—I much hope it.

These were your father's words:—If e'er my son
Follow the war, tell him, it is a school
Where all the principles tending to honor
Are taught, if truly followed: but for such
As repair thither as a place in which
They do presume they may with license practice
Their lawless riots, they shall never merit
The noble name of soldiers.
To obey their leaders, and shun mutinies;
To bear with patience the winter's cold,
And summer's scorching heat;
To dare boldly
In a fair cause; and, for their country's sake,
To run upon the cannon's mouth undaunted;
These are the essential parts make up a soldier;
Not swearing, dice, or drinking.

All.—There's no syllable

You speak, but is to me an oracle.

Lady A.—To conclude:

Beware ill company; for, often men
Are like to those with whom they do converse;
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And, from one man I warn you, and that's Wellborn;
 Not 'cause he's poor—that rather claims your pity;
 But that he's in his manners so depraved,
 And hath in vicious courses lost himself.
 'Tis true, your father loved him, while he was
 Worthy the loving; but, if he had lived
 To've known him as he is, he had cast him off,
 As you must do.
 Somebody comes. This way:
 Follow me to my chamber; you shall have gold
 To furnish you like my son, and still supplied
 As I hear from you. (Exeunt.)

Enter Order, Watchall, Sir Giles Overreach, Marrall, Greedy,
 Furnace and Amble.

Greedy.—Not to be seen!

Sir Giles.—Still cloistered up! Her reason,
 I hope, assures her, though she makes herself
 Close prisoner ever for her husband's loss,
 'Twill not recover him.

Ord.—Sir, 'tis her will;
 Which we, that are her servants, ought to serve,
 And not dispute: howe'er, you're nobly welcome;
 And, if you please to stay, that you may think so,
 There came, not six days since, from Hull, a pipe
 Of rich Canary, which shall spend itself
 For my lady's honor.

Gree.—Is it of the right race?
 (Sir Giles and Marrall converse apart.)

Ord.—Yes, Master Greedy.

Amb.—How his mouth runs o'er!

Fur.—I'll make it run and run.
 Save your good worship!

Gree.—Honest Master Cook, thy hand; again: how I love thee!
 Are the good dishes still in being? speak, boy.

Fur.—If you've a mind to feed, there is a chine
 Of beef well seasoned.

Gree.—Good!

Fur.—A pheasant, larded.

Gree.—That I might now give thanks for it!

Fur.—Besides, there came last night, from the forest of Sherwood,

The fattest stag I ever cooked.

Gree.—A stag, man?

Fur.—A stag, sir; part of it prepared for dinner
And baked in puff-paste.

Gree.—Puff-paste, too! Sir Giles,
A ponderous chine of beef! a pheasant larded!
And red deer, too, Sir Giles, and baked in puff-paste!
All business set aside, let us give thanks here.

Sir G.—You know, we cannot.

Marrall.—Your worships are to sit on a commission,
And, if you fail to come, you lose the cause.

Gree.—Cause me no causes; I'll prove't, for such a dinner,
We may put off a commission: you shall find it
Henrici decimo quarto.

Sir G.—Fie, Master Greedy!

Will you lose me a thousand pounds for a dinner?
No more, for shame! We must forget the belly
When we think of profit.

Gree.—Well, you shall o'er-rule me.

I could e'en cry now. Do you hear, Master Cook?
Send but a corner of that immortal pasty,
And I, in thankfulness, will, by your boy,
Send you—a brace of three-pences.

Fur.—Will you be so prodigal?

Sir G. (to Order)—Remember me to your lady.

Enter Wellborn.

Whom have we here?

Well.—You know me.

Sir G.—I did once, but now will not;
Thou art no blood of mine.
Avaunt, thou beggar!

If ever thou presume to cross me more,
I'll have thee caged and whipped. (Exit.)

Gree.—I'll grant the warrant.

Think of pye-corner, Furnace!

(Exeunt Greedy and Marrall, Marrall eyeing Wellborn contemptuously, who takes a chair and sits.)

Wat.—Will you out, sir?

I wonder how you durst creep in.

Ord.—This is rudeness,
And saucy impudence.

Amb.—Cannot you stay
To be served, among your fellows, from the basket,
But you must press into the hall?

Fur.—Pr'ythee, vanish
Into some outhouse, though it be the pigstye;
My scullion shall come to thee.

Well.—This is rare.

Enter Allworth.

Oh, here's Tom Allworth. Tom!

All.—We must be strangers;
Nor would I have you seen here for a million! (Exit.)

Well.—Better and better. He contemns me, too!

Enter Abigail and Tabitha.

Abigail (seeing Wellborn).—Mercy preserve my sight!
What thing is this?

Tabitha.—A wretched object, truly.
Let's hence, for heaven's sake, or I shall swoon.

Abi.—I begin to faint already. (Exeunt.)

Fur.—Will you know your way, sir?

Amb.—Or shall we teach you,
By the head and shoulders?

Well.—No; I will not stir:
Do you mark, I will not. (Starts up.) Let me see the
wretch

That dares attempt to force me. Why, you slaves,
Created only to make legs, and cringe;
To carry in a dish, and shift a trencher;
That have not souls only to hope a blessing
Beyond your master's leaving—who advances?
Who shows me the way? (Threatening them.)

All the Servants.—Help, fellows, help!—Within, there!

Ord.—Here comes my lady.

Enter Lady Allworth.

Lady A.—How now? What noise is this?

Well.—Madam, my designs
Bear me to you.

Lady A.—To me?

Well.—And, though I've met with
But ragged entertainment from your grooms here,
I hope from you to receive that noble usage,
As may become the true friend of your husband,
And then I shall forget these.

Lady A.—I'm amazed,
To see and hear this rudeness. Dar'st thou think,
Though sworn, that it can ever find belief
That I, who to the best men of this country
Denied my presence since my husband's death,
Can fall so low as to exchange words with thee?

Well.—Scorn me not, good lady;
But, as in form you are angelical,
Imitate the heavenly natures, and vouchsafe
At the least, a while to hear me. You will grant
The blood that runs in this arm is as noble
As that which fills your veins; your swelling titles,
Your ample fortune, with your men's observance
And women's flattery, are in you no virtues;
Nor these rags, with my poverty, in me vices.
You have a fair fame, and, I know, deserve it;—
Yet, lady, I must say, in nothing more
Than in the pious sorrow you have shown
For your late noble husband.

Ord.—There he touched her. (Aside.)

Well.—That husband, madam, was once in his fortune
 Almost as low as I; wants, debts, and quarrels,
 Lay heavy on him: let it not be thought
 A boast in me, though I say, I relieved him.
 'Twas I that gave him fashion; mine the sword
 That did on all occasions second his;
 I brought him on and off with honor, lady;
 And when in all men's judgments he was sunk,
 And in his own hopes not to be buoyed up,
 I stepped unto him, took him by the hand,
 And set him upright.

Fur.—Are not we base rogues,
 That could forget this? (Aside.)

Well.—I confess, you made him
 Master of your estate; nor could your friends,
 Though he brought no wealth with him, blame you for't:
 For he'd a shape, and to that shape a mind
 Made up of all parts, either great or noble;
 So winning a behavior, not to be
 Resisted, madam.

Lady A.—'Tis most true, he had.

Well.—For his sake, then, in that I was his friend,
 Do not contemn me.

Lady A.—For what's past, excuse me:
 I will redeem it. (Offers him her pocket-book.)

Well.—Madam, on no terms:
 I will nor beg nor borrow sixpence of you;
 But be supplied elsewhere, or want thus ever.
 One only suit I make; pray give me leave.
 (Lady Allworth signs to the servants, who retire.)
 I will not tire your patience with relation
 Of the bad art my uncle, Overreach,
 Still forged to strip me of my fair possessions;
 Nor how he now shuts door upon my want.
 Would you but vouchsafe
 To your dear husband's friend—as well you may,
 Your honor still let free—but such feigned grace,
 As might beget opinion in Sir Giles

Of a true passion tow'rds me, you would see,
In the mere thought to prey on me again,
When all that's yours were mine, he'd turn my friend;
And, that no rub might stay my course to you,
Quit all my owings, set me trimly forth,
And furnished well with gold—which I should use,
I trust, to your no shame, lady; but live
Ever a grateful debtor to your gentleness.

Lady A.—What! nothing else?

Well.—Nothing, unless you please to charge your servants
To throw away a little respect upon me.

Lady A.—All you demand is yours.

(She beckons the servants.)

Respect this gentleman,
As 'twere myself. Adieu, dear Master Wellborn—
Pray let me see you with your oftenest means:
I am ever bound to you.

Well.—Your honor's servant.

(Kisses her hand. Exit Lady Allworth.)

All the Servants (coming up to Wellborn with bows and
cringes).—Ah, sweet sir—

Well.—Nay, all's forgiven, all forgotten, friends;
And, for a lucky omen to my project,
Shake hands, and end all quarrels in the cellar.

All the Servants.—Agreed, agreed! Still merry, Master Well
born.

(Exeunt servants.)

Well.—Faith, a right worthy and a liberal lady,
Who can at once so kindly meet my purposes,
And brave the flouts of censure, to redeem
Her husband's friends! When, by this honest plot,
The world believes she means to heal my wants
With her extensive wealth, each noisy creditor
Will be struck mute; and I, thus left at large,
To practise on my uncle, Overreach,
May work, perhaps, the measure to redeem
My mortgaged fortune, which he stripped me of
When headlong dissipation quelled my reason.
The fancy pleases; if the plot succeed,
'Tis a new way to pay old debts, indeed.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The skirts of Lady Allworth's park.

Enter Marrall and Sir Giles.

Sir Giles.—He's gone, I warrant thee; this commission crushed him.

Marrall.—Your worship has the way on't, and ne'er miss
To squeeze these unthrifths into air: and yet
The chap-fall'n justice did his part, returning,
For your advantage, the certificate,
Against his conscience and his knowledge, too,—
With your good favor,—to the utter ruin
Of the poor farmer.

Sir G.—'Twas for these good ends
I made him a justice: he that bribes his belly
Is certain to command his soul.

Mar.—I wonder,
Still with your license, why, your worship, having
The power to put this thin-gut in commission,
You are not in't yourself?

Sir G.—Thou art a fool;
In being out of office, I am out of danger;
Where, if I were a justice, besides the trouble,
I might, or out of wilfulness, or error,
Run myself finely into a præmunire,
And so become a prey to the informer.
No, I'll have none on't: 'tis enough I keep
Greedy at my devotion: so he serve
My purposes, let him hang, or damn, I care not;
Friendship is but a word.

Mar.—You are all wisdom.

Sir G.—I would be worldly wise; for the other wisdom
That does prescribe us a well-governed life,
And to do right to others, as ourselves,
I value not an atom.

Mar.—What course take you—
With your good patience—to hedge in the manor

Of your neighbor, Master Frugal? As 'tis said,
He will nor sell, nor borrow, nor exchange;
And his land, lying in the midst of your many lordships,
Is a foul blemish.

Sir G.—I have thought of't, Marrall,
And it shall take. I must have all men sellers,
And I the only purchaser.

Mar.—'Tis most fit, sir.

Sir G.—I'll, therefore, buy some cottage near his manor;
Which done, I'll make my men break ope' his fences,
Ride o'er his standing corn, and in the night
Set fire to his barns, or break his cattle's legs;
These trespasses draw on suits, and suits expenses
Which I can spare, but will soon beggar him.
When I have harried him thus two or three years,
Though he sue in forma pauperis, in spite
Of all his thrift and care, he'll grow behind-hand.

Mar.—The best I ever heard! I could adore you.

Sir G.—Then, with the favor of my man of law,
I will pretend some title: want will force him
To put it to arbitrement; then, if he sell
For half the value, he shall have ready money,
And I possess his land.

Mar.—'Tis above wonder!

Wellborn was apt to sell, and needed not
These fine arts, sir, to hook him in.

Sir G.—Well thought on.

That varlet, Marrall, lives too long, to upbraid me
With my close cheat put upon him. Will nor cold,
Nor hunger kill him?

Mar.—I know not what to think on't.

I've used all means; and, the last night, I caused
His host, the tapster, to turn him out of doors;
And have been since with all your friends and tenants,
And, on the forfeit of your favor, charged them,
Though a crust of mouldy bread would keep him from
starving,

Yet they should not relieve him. This is done, sir

Sir G.—That was something, Marrall; but thou must go further,

And suddenly, Marrall.

Mar.—Where, and when you please, sir.

Sir G.—I'd have thee seek him out, and, if thou can'st,
Persuade him that 'tis better steal than beg.
Then, if I prove he has but robbed a hen-roost,
Not all the world shall save him from the gallows.
Do anything to work him to despair,
And 'tis thy masterpiece.

Mar.—I'll do my best, sir.

Sir G.—I'm now on my main work, with the Lord Lovell,
The gallant-minded, popular Lord Lovell,
The minion of the people's love. I hear
He's come into the country; and my aims are,
To insinuate myself into his knowledge,
And then invite him to my house.

Mar.—I have you:

This points to my young mistress.

Sir G.—She must part with
That humble title, and the honorable,
Right honorable, Marrall, my right honorable daughter,
If all I have, or e'er shall get, will do it!
I'll have her well attended; there are ladies
Of errant knights decayed, and brought so low,
That, for cast clothes and meat, will gladly serve her;
And 'tis my glory, though I come from the city,
To have their issue, whom I have undone,
To kneel to mine, as bond-slaves.

Mar.—'Tis fit state, sir.

Sir G.—And, therefore, I'll not have a chambermaid
That ties her shoes, or any meaner office,
But such whose fathers were right worshipful.
'Tis a rich man's pride! there having ever been
More than a feud, a strange antipathy,
Between us and true gentry.

Enter Wellborn.

Mar.—See, who's here, sir!

Sir G.—Hence, monster! prodigy!

Wellborn.—Call me what you will;—

I am your nephew, sir, your sister's son.

Sir G.—Avoid my sight! thy breath's infectious, rogue!

I shun thee as a leprosy, or the plague.

Come hither, Marrall. This is the time to work him.

Mar.—I warrant you, sir.

(Exit Sir Giles.)

Well.—By this light, I think he's mad.

Mar.—Mad! had you ta'en compassion on yourself,

You long since had been mad.

Well.—You've ta'en a course,

Between you and my venerable uncle,

To make me so.

Mar.—The more pale-spirited you,

That would not be instructed. I swear deeply—

Well.—By what?

Mar.—By my religion.

Well.—Thy religion?

The devil's creed! But what would you have done?

Mar.—Had there been but one tree in all the shire,

Nor any hope to compass a penny halter,

Before, like you, I had outlived my fortunes,

A withe had served my turn to hang myself.

I'm zealous in your cause: pray, hang yourself,

And presently, as you love your credit.

Well.—I thank you.

Mar.—Will you stay till you die in a ditch?

Or, if you dare not do the feat yourself,

But that you'll put the state to charge and trouble,

Is there no purse to be cut? house to be broken?

Or market woman with eggs, that you may murder,

And so dispatch the business?

Well.—Here's variety,

I must confess; but I'll accept of none

Of all your gentle offers, I assure you.

Mar.—Why, have you hope ever to eat again,

Or drink? or be the master of three farthings?

If you like not hanging, drown yourself; take some
course
For your reputation.

Well.—'Twill not do, dear tempter,
With all the rhetoric the fiend hath taught you.
I am as far as thou art from despair;
Nay, I have confidence, which is more than hope,
To live, and suddenly, better than ever.

Mar.—Ha! ha! these castles you build in the air
Will not persuade me or to give or lend
A token to you.

Well.—I'll be more kind to thee:
Come, thou shalt dine with me.

Mar.—With you!

Well.—Nay, more, dine gratis.

Mar.—Under what hedge, I pray you? or at whose cost?
Are they padders, or gipsies, that are your consorts?

Well.—Thou art incredulous; but thou shalt dine,
Not alone at her house, but with a gallant lady;
With me and with a lady.

Mar.—Lady! what lady?
With the lady of the lake, or queen of fairies?
For, I know, it must be an enchanted dinner.

Well.—With the Lady Allworth, knave.

Mar.—Nay, now there's hope.
Thy brain is cracked.

Well.—Mark, there, with what respect
I am entertained.

Mar.—With choice, no doubt, of dog-whips.
Why, dost thou ever hope to pass her porter?

Well.—'Tis not far off, go with me; trust thine own eyes.

Mar.—Troth, in my hope, or my assurance, rather,
To see thee curvet and mount like a dog in a blanket,
If ever thou presume to pass her threshold,
I will endure thy company.

Well.—Come along, then. (Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

The hall in Lady Allworth's house.

Enter Watchall, Furnace, Order, Amble and Allworth.

Allworth.—Your courtesies o'erwhelm me: I much grieve
To part from such true friends: and yet find comfort.
My attendance on my honorable lord,
Whose resolution holds to visit my lady,
Will speedily bring me back.

(Wellborn and Marrall without. Wellborn knocks.

Exit Watchall.)

Mar.—Dar'st thou venture further?

Well.—Yes, yes, and knock again. (Knocks.)

Order.—'Tis he; disperse!

Amble.—Perform it bravely.

Furnace.—I know my cue, ne'er doubt me. (Exeunt.)

Enter Watchall, Wellborn and Marrall.

Watchall.—Beast that I was, to make you stay! Most welcome!
You were long since expected.

Well.—Say so much
To my friend, I pray you.

Wat.—For your sake, I do, sir.

Mar.—For his sake!

Well.—Mum; this is nothing.

Mar.—More than ever
I'd have believed, though I had found it in my primer.

All.—When I have given you reasons for my late harshness,
You'll pardon and excuse me; for, believe me,
Though now I part abruptly, in my service
I will deserve it.

Mar.—Service! with a vengeance!

Well.—I'm satisfied. Farewell, Tom.

All.—All joy stay with you! (Exit.)

Enter Amble.

Amb.—You're happily encountered; I ne'er yet
Presented one so welcome as, I know,
You will be to my lady.

Mar.—This is some vision;
Or, sure, these men are mad to worship a dunghill.
It cannot be a truth.

Well.—Be still a pagan,
An unbelieving infidel; be so, miscreant,
And meditate on blankets and on dog-whips!

Enter Furnace.

Fur.—I'm glad you're come: until I know your pleasure,
I knew not how to serve up my lady's dinner.

Mar.—His pleasure! is it possible?

Well.—What's thy will?

Fur.—Marry, sir, I have
Some rails and quails, and my lady willed me ask you
What kind of sauces best affect your palate,
That I may use my utmost skill to please it.
(Wellborn whispers to Furnace.)

Mar.—(Walking about amazed.) The devil's entered this
cook: sauce for his palate,
That, on my knowledge,
Durst wish but cheese-parings and brown bread on
Sundays!

Well.—That way I like them best.

Fur.—It shall be done, sir.

Well.—What think you of the hedge we shall dine under?
Shall we feed gratis?

Mar.—I know not what to think;
Pray you, make me not mad.

Enter Order.

Ord.—This place becomes you not;
Pray you, walk, sir, to the dining-room.

Well.—I am well here,
Till her ladyship quits her chamber.

Mar.—Well here, say you?
'Tis a rare change! but yesterday, you thought
Yourself well in a barn, wrapped up in pease-straw.

Enter Tabitha and Abigail.

Tabitha.—Oh! you're much wished for, sir.

Abigail.—Last night, my lady
Dreamt of you; and her first command this morning
Was to have notice, sir, of your arrival.

Wat.—See my lady.

Enter Lady Allworth.

Lady Allworth.—I come to meet you, and languished till I
saw you.

This first kiss is for form: I allow a second
To such a friend. (Wellborn salutes her.)

Mar.—To such a friend! heaven bless me!

Well.—I'm wholly yours; yet, madam, if you please
To grace this gentleman with a salute—
(Puts Marrall over to Lady Allworth.)

Mar.—Salute me at his bidding!
(Retreats toward the door.)

Well.—I shall receive it
As a most high favor.

Lady A.—Your friends are ever welcome to me.

Well.—Run backward from a lady! and such a lady!

Mar.—To kiss her foot is, to poor me, a favor
I am unworthy of—

Lady A.—Nay, pray you, rise;
And since you are so humble, I'll exalt you:
You shall dine with me to-day, at mine own table.

Mar.—Your ladyship's table! I'm not good enough
To sit at your steward's board.

Lady A.—You are too modest;
I will not be denied.

Enter Order.

Ord.—Dinner is ready for your ladyship.

Lady A.—Come, Master Wellborn—

(To Marrall, who is retreating again.)

Nay, keep us company.

Mar.—I was ne'er so graced.

(Lady Allworth and Wellborn take Marrall by the hand—he bowing with the greatest servility—they retire, followed by Abigail, Tabitha, Amble and Watchwell.)

Enter Furnace.

Ord.—So, we have played our parts, and are come off well;
But if I know the mystery, why my lady
Consented to it, may I perish!

Fur.—Would I had

The roasting of his heart that cheated him,
And forces the poor gentleman to these shifts!
By fire!—for cooks are Persians, and swear by it,—
Of all the griping and extorting tyrants
I ever heard or read of, I ne'er met
A match to Sir Giles Overreach.

Wat.—What will you take

To tell him so, fellow Furnace?

Fur.—Just as much

As my throat is worth; for that would be the price on't
To have a usurer that starves himself,
To grow rich, and then purchase, is too common:
But this Sir Giles feeds high; keeps many servants;
Rich in his habit, vast in his expenses!
Yet he, to admiration, still increases
In wealth and lordships.

Ord.—He frights men out of their estates,

And breaks through all law-nets, made to curb ill men,
As they were cobwebs. No man dares reprove him.
Such a spirit to dare, and power to do, were never
Lodged so unluckily.

Enter Amble.

Amb.—Ha! ha! I shall burst.

Ord.—Contain thyself, man.

Fur.—Or make us partakers
Of your sudden mirth.

Amb.—Ha! ha! my lady has got
Such a guest at her table!—this term-driver, Marrall,
This snip of an attorney!

Wat.—What of him, man?

Amb.—The knave feeds so slovenly!

Fur.—Is this all?

Amb.—My lady
Drank to him for fashion's sake, or to please Master
Wellborn;
As I live, he rises, and takes up a dish
In which there were some remnants of a boiled capon,
And pledges her in white broth!

Fur.—Nay, 'tis like
The rest of his tribe.

Amb.—And when I brought him wine,
He leaves his chair, and, after a leg or two,
Most humbly thanks my worship—my worship!

All the Servants.—Ha! ha! ha!

Ord.—Risen already?

Fur.—My lady frowns.

Amb.—I shall be chid. (Exit Furnace.)

Enter Lady Allworth, Wellborn and Marrall.

Lady A.—You attend us well!
Let me have no more of this: I observed your jeering.
Sir, I will have you know, whom I think worthy
To sit at my table,
When I am present, is not your companion.

Ord.—(Aside.) Nay, she'll preserve what's due to her.

Lady A.—(To Wellborn). You are master
Of your own will. I know so much of manners,

As not to inquire your purposes; in a word,
To me you are ever welcome, as to a house
That is your own.

Well.—(To *Marrall*.) Mark that.

Mar.—With reverence, sir,
And it like your worship.

Well.—Trouble yourself no further;
Dear madam, my heart's full of zeal and service,
However in my language I am sparing.
Come, Master *Marrall*.

Mar.—I attend your worship.

(*Exeunt Watchall, Wellborn and Marrall.*)

Lady A.—(To servants.) I see in your looks you are sorry
and you know me
An easy mistress: be merry, I have forgot all.
Order and Amble, come with me; I must give you
Further directions.

Ord.—What you please.

Amb.—We are ready. (Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

The open country. Enter *Wellborn* and *Marrall*.

Wellborn.—I think I'm in a good way.

Marrall.—Good? Sir; the best way:

The certain best way.

You are worshipful—and I hope you will become right
worshipful.

Well.—Is't for your ease

You keep your hat off?

Mar.—Ease, and it like your worship!

I hope Jack *Marrall* shall not live so long
To prove himself such an unmannerly beast,
Though it hail hazel-nuts, as to be covered
When your worship's present.

Well.—(Aside.) Is not this a true rogue.

That, out of mere hope of future cozenage,
Can turn thus suddenly? 'tis rank already.

Mar.—I know your worship's wise, and needs no counsel;
 Yet if, in my desire to do you service,
 I humbly offer my advice (but still
 Under correction), I hope I shall not
 Incur your high displeasure.

Well.—No; speak freely.

Mar.—Then, in my judgment, sir, my simple judgment,
 (Still with your worship's favor) I could wish you
 A better habit; for this cannot be
 But much distasteful to the noble lady
 That loves you:
 I have twenty pounds here,
 Which, out of my true love, I'll presently
 Lay down at your worship's feet; 'twill serve to buy you
 A riding suit.

Well.—But where's the horse?

Mar.—My gelding
 Is at your service: nay, you shall ride me,
 Before your worship shall be put to the trouble
 To walk afoot. Alas! when you are lord
 Of this lady's manor (as I know you will be),
 You may with the lease of glebe land, called Knave's
 Acre,
 A place I would manure, requite your vassal.

Well.—I thank thy love; but will make no use of it.
 Did I want clothes, think'st thou I could not have 'em
 For one word to my lady?

Mar.—As if I knew not that!

Well.—Come, I'll tell thee a secret, and so leave thee.
 I'll not give her the advantage, though she be
 A gallant-minded lady, after we're married,
 To hit me in the teeth, and say, she was forced
 To buy my wedding clothes—
 No. I'll be furnished something like myself,
 And so farewell. For thy suit touching Knave's-Acre,
 When it is mine, 'tis thine. (Exit.)

Mar.—I thank your worship.
 How was I cozened in the calculation

Of this man's fortune! My master borend, too,
Whose pupil I am in the art of undoing men.
For that is our profession! Well, well, Master Wellborn,
You are of a sweet nature, and fit again to be cheated.
Which, if the Fates please, when you are possessed
Of the land and lady, your same question shall be.
I'll presently think of the means.

Sir Giles.—(Without.) Sarah, take my horse.
I'll walk, to get me an appetite, 'tis but a mile,
And exercise will keep me from being sick.

Enter Sir Giles.

Ha! Marrall!—Is he conjuring? Perhaps
The knave has wrought the prodigal to do
Some outrage on himself, and now he feels
Compunction in his conscience for't? no matter,
So it be done. Marrall! Marrall!

Mar.—Sir!

Sir G.—How succeed we
In our plot on Wellborn?

Mar.—Never better, sir.

Sir G.—Has he hanged or drowned himself?

Mar.—No, sir, he lives:
Lives once more to be made a prey to you,
A greater prey than ever.

Sir G.—Art thou in thy wits?
If thou art, reveal this miracle, and freely.

Mar.—A lady, sir, is fallen in love with him.

Sir G.—With him! What lady?

Mar.—The rich Lady Allworth.

Sir G.—Then dost thou dar'st thou speak this?

Mar.—I speak truth.
And I do so but once a year, unless
It be to you, sir. We dined with her ladyship,
I thank his worship.

Sir G.—His worship!

Mar.—As I live, sir,

I dined with him at the great lady's table,
Simple as I stand here; and saw when she kissed him,
And would, at his request, have kissed me, too.

Sir G.—Why, thou rascal!

To tell me these impossibilities.

Dine at her table! and kiss him! or thee!—

Impudent varlet, have not I myself,

Ten times attempted, since her husband's death,

In vain, to see her, though I came—a suitor?

And yet your good solicitorship, and rogue Wellborn,

Were brought into her presence, feasted with her!—

But that I know thee a dog that cannot blush,

This most incredible lie would call up one

On thy buttermilk cheeks.

Mar.—Shall I not trust my eyes, sir,

Or taste? I feel her good cheer in my belly.

Sir G.—You shall feel me, if you give not over, sirrah.

Recover your brains again, and be no more gulled

With a beggar's plot, assisted by the aids

Of serving-men and chambermaids;

Or I'll quit you

From my employments.

Mar.—Will you credit this yet?

On my confidence of their marriage, I offered Well-
born—

I'd give a crown now I durst say his worship— (Aside.)

My nag and twenty pounds.

Sir G.—Did you so, idiot?

(Strikes him.)

Was this the way to work him to despair,

Or rather to cross me?

(Beats him.)

Mar.—Will your worship kill me?

Sir G.—No, no; but drive the lying spirit out of you.

Mar.—He's gone.

Sir G.—I've done, then. Now, forgetting

Your late imaginary feast and lady,

Know, my Lord Lovell dines with me to-morrow;

Be careful naught be wanting to receive him;

And bid my daughter's women trim her up;

Though they paint her, so she catch the lord, I'll thank 'em.

There's money for my late blows.

Mar.—(Aside.) I may yet cry quittance;

There may be a time—

Sir G.—Do you grumble?

Mar.—No, sir.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III. SCENE I.

The skirts of Lady Allworth's park. Enter Lovell and Allworth.

Lovell.—(Speaking off as he enters.) Drive the coach round the hill; something in private I must impart to Allworth.

Allworth.—Oh, my lord,
What sacrifice of rev'rence, duty, watching,
Although I could put off the use of sleep,
And ever wait on your commands to serve 'em,
What dangers, though in ne'er so horrid shapes,
Nay, death itself, though I should run to meet it,
Can I, and with a thankful willingness, suffer;
But still the retribution will fall short
Of your bounties showered upon me!

Lov.—Nay, good youth,
Till what I purpose be put into act,
Do not o'erprize it. Since you've trusted me
With your soul's nearest, nay, her dearest secret,
Rest confident, 'tis in a cabinet locked
Treachery shall never open. I have found you
More zealous in your love and service to me
Than I have been in my rewards.

All.—Still great ones,
Above my merit,
You have been
More like a father to me than a master:
'Pray you, pardon the comparison.

Lov.—I allow it;
And to give you assurance that I am pleased in't,

My carriage and demeanor to your mistress,
Fair Margaret, shall truly witness for me,
I can command my passions.

All.—'Tis a conquest

Few men can boast of, when they are tempted.—Oh!

Lov.—Why do you sigh? Can you be doubtful of me?
By that fair name I in the wars have purchased,
And all my actions, hitherto untainted,
I will not be more true to mine own honor
Than to thee, Allworth!

All.—Were you to encounter with a single foe,
The victory were certain: but to stand
The charge of two such potent enemies,
At once assaulting you, as wealth and beauty,
And those, too, seconded with power, is odds
Too great for Hercules.

Lov.—Speak your doubts and fears,
Since you will nourish 'em, in plainer language,
That I may understand 'em.

All.—My much-loved lord, were Margaret only fair,
You might command your passion;
But, when the well-tuned accents of her tongue
Make music to you, and with numerous sounds
Assault your hearing,
Hippolytus himself would leave Diana,
To follow such a Venus.

Lov.—Love hath made you
Poetical, Allworth.

All.—Grant all these beat off
(Which, if it be in man to do, you'll do it),
Mammon, in Sir Giles Overreach, steps in
With heaps of ill-got gold, and as much land
As would tire
A falcon's wings in one day to fly over.
I here release your trust:
'Tis happiness enough for me to serve you,
And sometimes, with chaste eyes, to look upon her.

Lov.—Why, shall I swear?

All.—Oh, by no means, my lord!

Lov.—Suspend

Your judgment till the trial. How far is't
To Overreach's house?

All.—At the most, some half hour's riding;
You'll soon be there.

Lov.—And you the sooner freed
From your jealous fears.

All.—Oh, that I durst but hope it! (Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

The hall in Sir Giles' house. Enter Sir Giles, Greedy and Marrall.

Sir Giles.—Spare for no cost; let my dressers crack with
the weight
Of rare viands.

Greedy.—Store indeed's no sore, sir.

Sir G.—That proverb fits your stomach, Master Greedy.

Greedy.—It does indeed, Sir Giles; I do not like to see a table
ill-spread, poor, meagre, just sprinkled o'er with salad,
sliced beef, giblets and pigs' pettitoes. But the sub-
stantials! Oh, Sir Giles, the substantials! The state
of a fat turkey, now! The decorum, the grandeur he
marches in with! Oh, I declare, I do much honor a
chine of beef! Oh, I do reverence a loin of veal!

Sir G.—And let no plate be seen, but what's pure gold,
Or such whose workmanship exceeds the matter
That it is made of: let my choicest linen
Perfume the room; and, when we wash, the water,
With precious powders mixed, so please my lord
That he may with envy wish to bathe so ever.

Marrall.—'Twill be very chargeable.

Sir G.—Avant, you drudge!

Now all my labored ends are at the stake,
Is't a time to think of thrift? Call in my daughter,
Call in my daughter. (Exit Marrall.)

And, Master Justice, since you love choice dishes,
And plenty of 'em—

Gree.—As I do, indeed, sir,
Almost as much as to give thanks for them.

Sir G.—I do confer that providence, with my power
Of absolute command to have abundance,
To your best care.

Gree.—I'll punctually discharge it,
And give the best directions.
(Aside.) Now am I,
In mine own conceit, a monarch; at the least,
Arch-president of the boiled, the roast, the baked;
I'd not exchange my throne for the Great Mogul's;
For which I will eat often; and give thanks,
When my belly's braced up like a drum; and that's
pure justice. (Exit.)

Sir G.—It must be so: should the foolish girl prove modest,
She may spoil all; she had it not from me,
But from her mother; I was ever forward,
As she must be; and, therefore, I'll prepare her.

Enter Marrall, followed by Margaret and two female attendants.

Alone, Margaret—

Alone—and let your women wait without.

(Exeunt women and Marrall.)

Margaret.—Your pleasure, sir?

Sir G.—Ha! this is a neat dressing!
These Orient pearls and diamonds well placed, too!
The gown affects me not,—it should have been
Embroidered o'er and o'er with flowers of gold;
But these rich jewels and quaint fashion help it.
How like you your new woman,
The Lady Downfallen?

Marg.—Well, for a companion;
Not as a servant.

Sir G.—Is she humble, Meg,
And careful, too, her ladyship forgotten?

Marg.—I pity her fortune.

Sir G.—Pity her! Trample on her.

I took her up in an old tamin gown,
E'en starved for very want of food, to serve thee;
And if I understand she but repines
To do thee any duty, though ne'er so servile,
I'll pack her to her knight, where I have lodged him,
Into the counter, and there let 'em howl together.

Marg.—You know your own ways; but for me, I blush
When I command her, that was once attended
With persons not inferior to myself
In birth.

Sir G.—In birth! Why, art thou not my daughter,
The blest child of my industry and wealth?
Part with these humble thoughts, and apt thyself
To the noble state I labor to advance thee;
Or, by my hopes to see thee honorable,
I will adopt a stranger to my fortunes,
And throw thee from my care. Do not provoke me.

Marg.—I will not, sir; mould me which way you please.

Enter Greedy, with a napkin round his neck and a dumpling
in his hand.

Gree.—Sir Giles, Sir Giles—

Sir G.—How! interrupted?

Gree.—'Tis matter of importance.

The cook, sir, is self-willed, and will not learn
From my experience. There's a fawn brought in, sir,
And, for my life, I cannot make him roast it whole,
With a Norfolk dumpling in the belly of it:
And, sir, we wise men know, without the dumpling
'Tis not worth three-pence.

Sir G.—Would it were whole in thy belly,

To stuff it out! Cook it any way: pr'ythee, leave me.

Gree.—Without order for the dumpling?

Sir G.—Let it be dumped

Which way thou wilt; or tell him, I will scald him
In his own caldron.

Gree.—I had lost my stomach,
Had I lost my dumpling.

(Exit.)

Sir G.—But to our business, Meg: You've heard who dines here?

Marg.—I have, sir.

Sir G.—'Tis an honorable man;

A lord, Meg, and commands a regiment
Of soldiers; and, what's rare, is one himself,
A bold and understanding one; and to be
A lord, and a good leader, in one volume,
Is granted unto few, but such as rise up
The kingdom's glory.

Reënter Greedy.

Gree.—I'll resign my office,
If I be not better obeyed.

Sir G.—Ods boddikins, art thou frantic?

Gree.—Frantic! 'twould make me frantic, and stark mad,
Were I not a justice of peace and quorum, too:
Which this rebellious cook cares not a straw for.
There are a dozen of woodcocks—
He has found out
A new device for sauce, and will not dish 'em
With toasts and butter.

Sir G.—Cook! Rogue, obey him!
I've given the word: pray, now remove yourself
To a collar of brawn, and trouble me no further.

Gree.—I will, and meditate what to eat at dinner. (Exit.)

Sir G.—And as I said, Meg, when this gull disturbed us,
This honorable lord, this colonel,
I would have to be thy husband.

Marg.—There's too much disparity
Between his quality and mine, to hope it.

Sir G.—I more than hope, and doubt not to effect it.
Be thou no enemy to thyself: my wealth
Shall weigh his titles down, and make you equals.
Now for the means to assure him thine, observe me:
Remember, he's a courtier, and a soldier,

And not to be trifled with; and, therefore, **when**
He comes to woo you, see you do not coy it:
This mincing modesty hath spoiled many a **match**
By a first refusal, in vain after hoped for.

Marg.—You'll have me, sir, preserve the distance that
Confines a virgin?

Sir G.—Virgin me no virgins!

I must have you lose that name, or you lose me;
I'll have you private—start not—I say, private:
If you are my true daughter,
You'll venture alone with one man, though he came,
Like Jupiter to Semele, and come off, too:
And, therefore, when he kisses you, kiss close.

Marg.—I've heard this is the wanton's fashion, sir,
Which I must never learn.

Sir G.—Learn anything,

And from any creature, that may make thee **great**;
E'en from the devil himself: stand not on form;
Words are no substances.

Marg.—With your leave, sir—in worldly policy,
This is not the way to make me his wife:
My virgin scruples overcome so soon,
Cannot but assure him,
I, that am light to him, will not hold weight
Whene'er by others tempted: so, in judgment,
If, to obey you, I forget my honor,
He must and will forsake me.

Sir G.—How! forsake thee!

Do I wear a sword for fashion? or is this arm
Shrunk up, or withered? Does there live a **man**,
Of that large list I have encountered with,
Can truly say I e'er gave inch of ground
Not purchased with his blood that did oppose me?
Forsake thee! He dares not.
Though all his captains, echoes to his will,
Stood armed by his side, to justify the wrong—
Spite of his lordship, and his colonelship,
Or the judge's favor—I would make him render
A bloody and a strict account, and force him,

By marrying thee, to cure thy wounded honor.
Meg, I have said it.

Enter Marrall, hastily.

Mar.—Sir, sir, the man of honor's come,
Newly alighted.

Sir G.—In there, without reply, and wait my call:
And do as I command, or thou art lost.

(Exit Margaret.)

What! is the loud music I gave orders for
Ready to receive him?

Mar.—'Tis, sir.

Sir G.—Let them sound

A princely welcome. (Exit Marrall.)

Roughness, a while leave me:

For fawning now, a stranger to my nature,

Must make way for me. (Music.)

Enter Marrall, Lovell and Allworth, preceded and followed
by servants.

Lovell.—Sir, you meet your trouble.

Sir G.—What you are pleased to style so is an honor
Above my worth and fortunes.

Allworth.—(Aside.) Strange! so humble!

Reënter Greedy, with a napkin under his chin.

Sir G.—Faugh! (Points to napkin, which Greedy instantly
snatches off and puts behind him.) A justice of
peace, my lord. (Presents Greedy to him.)

Lov.—Your hand, good sir.

Gree.—(Aside.) This is a lord: some would think this a
favor;

But I had rather have my hand in my dumpling.

Sir G.—Room for my lord.

Lov.—I miss, sir, your fair daughter,
To crown my welcome.

Sir G.—May it please my lord
 To taste a glass of Greek wine first; and suddenly
 She shall attend, my lord.

Lov.—You'll be obeyed, sir. (Exeunt all but Sir Giles.)

Sir G.—'Tis to my wish; as soon as come, ask for her!
 Why, Meg! Meg Overreach!

Reënter Margaret.

How! tears in your eyes!
 Hah! dry 'em quickly, or I'll dig 'em out.
 Is this a time to whimper? meet that greatness
 That flies into thy bosom: think what 'tis
 For me to say, My honorable daughter!
 No more; but be instructed, or expect—
 He comes.

Reënter Lovell, Allworth, Greedy and Marrall.

A well-formed girl, my lord.

Lov.—As I live, a rare one! (Salutes her.)

All.—(Aside.) He's ta'en already: I am lost.

Sir G.—That kiss
 Came twanging off; I like it. Quit the room.
 (Exeunt Greedy, Marrall and Allworth.)

A little bashful, my good lord, but you,
 I hope, will teach her boldness.

Lov.—I am happy
 In such a scholar; but—

Sir G.—I am too old to learn,
 And therefore leave you to yourselves. Remember!
 (Aside to Margaret and exit.)

Lov.—You see, fair lady, your father is solicitous
 To have you change the barren name of virgin
 Into a hopeful wife.

Marg.—His haste, my lord,
 Holds no power o'er my will.

Lov.—But o'er your duty.

Marg.—Which, forced too much, may break.

Lov.—Bend, rather, sweetest:
Think of your years.

Marg.—Too few to match with yours.

Lov.—I can advance you.

Marg.—To a hill of sorrow:

Where every hour I may expect to fall,
But never hope firm footing. You are nobie—
I of a low descent, however rich;
Oh, my good lord, I could say more, but that
I may not trust these walls.

Lov.—Pray you, trust my ear, then. (They whisper.)

Reënter Sir Giles, listening.

Sir G.—Close at it! whispering!—this is excellent!
And, by their postures, a consent on both parts.

Reënter Greedy.

Gree.—Sir Giles! Sir Giles!

Sir G.—The great fiend stop that clapper!

Gree.—It must ring out, sir, when my belly rings noon,
The baked meats are run out, the roast turned powder.

Sir G.—Stop your insatiate jaws, or
I shall powder you.

Gree.—Beat me to dust, I care not;
In such a cause as this, I'll die a martyr.

Sir G.—Disturb my lord,
When he is in discourse?

Gree.—Is't a time to talk,
When we should be munching?

Sir G.—Mum, villain; vanish! Shall we break a bargain
Almost made up?

(Exit, thrusting Greedy off before him.)

Lov.—Lady, I understand you,
And wish you happy in your choice; believe it,
I'll be a careful pilot to direct
Your yet uncertain bark to a port of safety.

Marg.—So shall your honor save two lives, and bind us
Your slaves forever.

Lov.—I'm in the act rewarded,
Since it is good: howe'er, you must put on
An amorous carriage towards me, till our purpose
Be brought to the wished end.

Marg.—I'm prone to that.

Lov.—Now break we off our conference. Sir Giles!
Where is Sir Giles?

Enter Sir Giles, Allworth, Greedy and Marrall.

Sir Giles.—My noble lord; and how
Does your lordship find her?

Lov.—Apt, Sir Giles, and coming;
And I like her the better.

Sir G.—(Aside.) So do I, too.

Lov.—Yet should we take forts at the first assault,
'Twere poor in the defendant: I will confirm her
With a love-letter or two, which I shall have
Delivered by my page: we must, for form, give way to't.

Sir G.—With all my soul.
A towardly gentleman!
Your hand, good Master Allworth: know my house
Is ever open to you.

Allworth.—(Aside.) 'Twas shut till now.

Sir G.—(To Margaret.) Well done, well done, my honorable
daughter!
Thou'rt so already. (Puts her over to Allworth.) Know
this gentle youth,
And cherish him, my honorable daughter!

Marg.—I shall, with my best care.

Servants.—(Without.) Room, room—make way there for my
lady.

Sir G.—What noise?

Greedy.—More stops
Before we go to dinner! Oh, my guts!

Enter six servants, Lady Allworth and Wellborn.

Lady Allworth.—(To Wellborn.) If I find welcome,
You shall share in't; if not, I'll back again;
For I come armed for all can be objected.

Lov.—How! the Lady Allworth!

Sir G.—And thus attended!

Marrall.—No, I am a dolt,
The spirit of lies hath entered me.

Lov.—Noble lady,
This is a favor, to forestall my visit,
The service of my life can never equal.

Lady A.—My lord, I laid wait for you; and much hoped
You would have made my poor house your first inn;
And therefore, doubting that you might forget me,
I borrowed so much from my long restraint,
And took the air, in person to invite you.

Lov.—Your bounties are so great, they rob me, madam,
Of words to give you thanks.

Lady A.—Good Sir Giles Overreach.
How dost thou, Marrall?—Liked you my meat so ill,
You'll dine no more with me?

Gree.—I will, when you please,
An it like your ladyship.

Lady A.—When you please, Master Greedy;
If meat can do't, you shall be satisfied.
And now, my lord, pray take into your knowledge
This gentleman: howe'er his outside's coarse,
(Presents Wellborn.)

His inward linings are as fine and fair
As any man's:
And howsoe'er his humor carries him
To be thus accoutred, or what taint soe'er,
For his wild life, hath stuck upon his fame,
He may, ere long, with boldness rank himself
With some that have contemned him. Sir Giles Over-
reach,

If I am welcome, bid him so.

Sir G.—My nephew!

He has been too long a stranger: faith you have:
Pray let it be mended.

(All converse apart but Sir Giles and Marrall.)

Mar.—Well, sir, what do you mean?

This is rogue Wellborn, monster, prodigy,
No man of worship,
Much less your nephew.

Sir G.—Well, sirrah, we shall reckon
For this hereafter.

Mar.—I'll not lose my jeer,
Though I be beaten dead for't.

Well.—Let my silence plead

In my excuse, my lord, till better leisure
Offer itself, to hear a full relation
Of my poor fortunes.

(Aside to Lovell.)

Lov.—I would hear, and help them.

(Bell rings.)

Gree.—Ah!

Sir G.—Your dinner waits you.

Lov.—Pray you, lead; we follow.

Lady A.—Dear Master Wellborn, come. You are my guest.

(Takes Wellborn's hand. Music. Exeunt all but Greedy.)

Gree.—Dear Master Wellborn! so she said: Heaven, heaven!

If my belly would give me leave, I could ruminate
All day on this; I've granted twenty warrants
To have him committed, from all the prisons in the shire,
To Nottingham gaol! And now, "Dear Master Well-
born!"

And "My good nephew!"—But I play the fool,
To stand here prating, and forget my dinner.

Reënter Marrall.

Are they set, Marrall?

Marrall.—Long since. (Greedy going, Marrall stops him.)

Pray you, a word, sir.

Gree.—No wording now.

Mar.—In troth, I must: my master,
 Knowing you are his good friend, makes bold with you,
 And does entreat you, more guests being come in
 Than he expected, especially his nephew,
 The table being full, too, you would excuse him,
 And wait to sup with him on the cold meat.

Gree.—How! no dinner,
 After all my care?

Mar.—'Tis but a penance for
 A meal; besides, you broke your fast.

Gree.—That was
 But a bit to stay my stomach. A man in commission
 Give place to a tatterdemalion?

Mar.—No big words, sir!
 Should his worship hear you—

Gree.—Lose my dumpling, too,
 And buttered toast and woodcocks!

Mar.—Come, have patience.
 If you will dispense a little with your justiceship,
 And sit with the maids below there, you'll have dump-
 ling,
 Woodcock and buttered toast, too, by and by.

Gree.—This revives me:
 I will gorge there sufficiently.

Mar.—There's your way, sir. (Exit.)

Gree.—I fear we shall have but short commons below. I am
 no chameleon, to feed on air; nor Frenchman, to feast
 on a soused frog, or regale on an ounce of beef in a
 Mediterranean sea of soup: I love to see the board well
 spread, groaning under its sav'ory burden, smoking hot,
 from spit, furnace and caldron. Odds me, Sir Giles!

(Exit.)

Enter Sir Giles.

Sir Giles.—She's caught! Oh, woman! What, neglect my lord,
 And all her compliments apply to Wellborn!
 In the wine she drinks,
 He being her pledge, she sends him burning kisses,
 And sits on thorns till she be private with him.

But why grieve I
 At this! It makes for me: if she prove his,
 All that is hers is mine, as I will work him.

Enter Marrall.

Marrall.—Sir, the whole board is troubled at your rising.

Sir G.—No matter, I'll excuse it. Pr'ythee, Marrall,
 Watch an occasion to invite my nephew
 To speak with me in private.

Mar.—Who! the rogue
 The lady scorned to look on?

Sir G.—Sirrah! Sirrah!

Enter Lovell, Margaret and Allworth.

(To Lovell.) My good lord, excuse my manners.

Lovell.—There needs none, Sir Giles;
 I may ere long say father, when it please
 My dearest mistress to give warrant to it.

Sir G.—She shall seal to it, my lord, and make me happy.

Lady Allworth.—(Without.) Nay, Master Wellborn—

Sir G.—Grosser and grosser!

Enter Lady Allworth, Wellborn and servants.

Lady A.—Provide my coach,
 I'll instantly away. My thanks, Sir Giles,
 For my entertainment. (Marrall whispers Wellborn.)

Sir G.—'Tis your nobleness
 To think it such.

Lady A.—I must do you a further wrong,
 In taking away your honorable guest.

Lov.—I wait on you, madam; farewell, good Sir Giles!

Lady A.—Nay, come, Master Wellborn— (Exit Marrall.)
 I must not leave you behind; in sooth, I must not.

Sir G.—Rob me not, madam, of all joys at once;
 Let my nephew stay behind: he shall have my coach,
 And, after some small conference between us,
 Soon overtake your ladyship.

Lady A.—Stay not long, sir.

Loc.—Farewell, dear Margaret! You shall every day
Hear from your servant by my faithful page.

Allworth.—'Tis a service I am proud of.

(Music. Exeunt all but Sir Giles, Wellborn and Margaret.)

Sir G.—Daughter, to your chamber. (Exit Margaret.)

You may wonder, nephew,
After so long an enmity between us,
I should desire your friendship.

Wellborn.—So I do, sir;
'Tis strange to me.

Sir G.—But I'll make it no wonder;
And, what is more, unfold my nature to you.
We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hope sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift them up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads, to press them to the bottom,
As, I must yield, with you I practised it;
But, now I see you in a way to rise,
I can and will assist you. This rich lady
(And I am glad of't) is enamored of you.
(Wellborn shakes his head.)

'Tis too apparent, nephew.

Well.—No such thing!
Compassion, rather, sir.

Sir G.—Well, in a word,
Because your stay is short, I'll have you seen
No more in this base shape; nor shall she say,
She married you like a beggar, or in debt.

Well.—(Aside.) He'll run into the noose, and save my labor.

Sir G.—You have a trunk of rich clothes, not far hence,
In pawn; I will redeem 'em, and, that no clamor
May taint your credit for your petty debts,
You shall have wherewithal to cut 'em off,
And go a free man to the wealthy lady.

Well.—This done, sir, out of love, and no ends else—

Sir G.—As it is, nephew.

Well.—Binds me still your servant.

Sir G.—No compliments: you're waited for. Ere you've supped,
You shall hear from me. My coach, knaves, for my
nephew!

To-morrow I will visit you.

Well.—Here's an uncle

In a man's extremes! How much they do belie you,
That say you are hard-hearted!

Sir G.—My deeds, nephew,
Shall speak my love; what men report, I weigh not.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Room in Lady Allworth's House. Lovell seated, sealing a letter, and Allworth waiting on him.

Lovell.—'Tis well. May this succeed.

I now discharge you
From further service: mind your own affairs;
I hope they'll prove successful.

Allworth.—What is blest

With your good wish, my lord, cannot but prosper.
Let after-times report, and to your honor,
How much I stand engaged, for I want language
To speak my debt; yet, if a tear or two
Of joy, for your much goodness, can supply
My tongue's defects, I could—

Lov.—Nay, do not melt;

This ceremonial thanks, to me's superfluous.

Sir Giles.—(Without.) Is my lord stirring?

Lov.—'Tis he! Oh, here's your letter.

(Takes the letter from the table and gives it to Allworth.)

Let him in.

(Allworth opens the door and stands retired.)

Enter Sir Giles and Marrall.

Sir G.—A good day to my lord!

Lov.—You are an early riser,
Sir Giles.

Sir G.—And reason, to attend your lordship.

Lov.—And you, too, Master Greedy, up so soon!

Greedy.—In troth, my lord, after the sun is up,
I cannot sleep: for I've a foolish stomach
That croaks for breakfast. With your lordship's favor,
I have a serious question to demand
Of my worthy friend, Sir Giles.

Lov.—Pray you, use your pleasure.

Gree.—How far, Sir Giles, and pray you, answer me,
Upon your credit, hold you it to be
From your manor-house to this of my Lady Allworth's?

Sir G.—Why, some four mile.

Gree.—How! four mile, good Sir Giles—
Upon your reputation, think better;
For four miles riding
Could not have raised so huge an appetite
As I feel gnawing on me.

Marrall.—Whether you ride
Or go afoot, you're that way still provided,
An't please your worship.

Sir G.—(Coming in.) How now, sirrah! prating
Before my lord! no deference! Go to my nephew,
See all his debts discharged, and help his worship
To fit on his rich suit.

Mar.—(Aside.) I may fit you, too. (Exit.)

Lov.—I have writ this morning
A few lines to my mistress, your fair daughter.

Sir G.—'Twill fire her, for she's wholly yours already.
Sweet Master Allworth, take my ring; 'twill carry you
To her presence, I dare warrant you; and there plead
For my good lord, if you shall find occasion.
That done, pray ride to Nottingham, get a license,
Still by this token. (To Lovell.) I will have't dis-
patched,
And suddenly, my lord, that I may say,
My honorable, nay, right honorable daughter.

Gree.—(Stopping Allworth.) Take my advice, young gentleman; get your breakfast;

'Tis unwholesome to ride fasting; I'll eat with you,
And that abundantly.

Sir G.—Some Fury's in that gut;
Hungry again! did you not devour this morning
A shield of brawn and a barrel of Colchester oysters?

Gree.—Why, that was, sir, only to scour my stomach,
A kind of preparative.

Lov.—Haste your return.

All.—I will not fail, my lord. (Exit.)

Gree.—Nor I, to line
My Christmas coffer. (Exit.)

Sir G.—To my wish (they sit), we're private.
I come not to make offer with my daughter
A certain portion, that were poor and trivial:
In one word I pronounce, all that is mine,
In lands or leases, ready coin or goods,
With her, my lord, comes to you; nor shall you have
One motive to induce you to believe
I live too long; since every year I'll add
Something unto the heap, which shall be yours, too.

Lov.—You are a right kind father.

Sir G.—You shall have reason
To think me such.
How do you like this seat of Lady Allworth's?
It is well wooded and well watered, the acres
Fertile and rich; would it not serve, for change,
To entertain your friends in a summer progress?
What thinks my noble lord?

Lov.—'Tis a wholesome air,
And well-built pile; and she that's mistress of it,
Worthy the large revenue.

Sir G.—She the mistress!
It may be so for a time; but, let my lord
Say, only that he likes it, and would have it,
I say, ere long 'tis his.

Lov.—Impossible!

Sir G.—You do conclude too fast, not knowing me
Nor the engines that I work by. 'Tis not alone
The Lady Allworth's lands—for those, once Wellborn's,
As, by her dotage on him, I know they will be,
Shall soon be mine; but point out any man's
In all the shire, and say they lie convenient
And useful for your lordship, and once more
I say aloud, they're yours.

Lov.—I dare not own
What's by unjust and cruel means extorted;
My fame and credit are more dear to me,
Than so to expose 'em to be censured by
The public voice.

Sir G.—You run, my lord, no hazard.
Your reputation shall still stand as fair
In all good men's opinions, as now;
For, though I do condemn report myself,
As a mere sound, I still will be so tender
Of what concerns you, in all points of honor,
That the immaculate whiteness of your fame
Shall ne'er be sullied with one taint or spot.
All my ambition is to have my daughter
Right honorable, which my lord can make her;
And, might I live to dance upon my knee
A young Lord Lovell, born by her unto you,
I write nil ultra to my proudest hopes.

Lov.—Are you not frightened with the imprecations
And curses of whole families, made wretched
By your sinister practices?

Sir G.—Yes, us rocks are,
When foamy billows split themselves against
Their flinty ribs; or, as the moon is moved,
When wolves, with hunger pined, howl at her brightness.
I'm of a solid temper, and, like these,
Steer on a constant course.
Nay, when my ears are pierced with widows' cries,
And undone orphans wash with tears my threshold,
I only think what 'tis to have my daughter
Right honorable; and 'tis a powerful charm

Makes me insensible of remorse or pity,
Or the least sting of conscience.

Lov.—I admire

The toughness of your nature.

Sir G.—"Tis for you,

My lord, and for my daughter, I am marble;
Nay, more, if you will have my character
In little, I enjoy more true delight
In my arrival to my wealth these dark
And crooked ways, than you shall e'er take pleasure
In spending what my industry hath compassed.
My haste commands me hence; in one word, therefore,
Is it a match, my lord?

Lov.—I hope that is past doubt, now.

Sir G.—Then rest secure; not the hate of all mankind here,

Nor fear of what can fall on me hereafter,
Shall make me study aught but your advancement
One story higher: an earl! if gold can do it.
Dispute not my religion, nor my faith;
Though I am borne thus headlong by my will,
You may make choice of what belief you please,
To me they're equal; so, my lord, good morrow.

(Exit.)

Lov.—He's gone; I wonder how the earth can bear him!

I, that have lived a soldier,
And stood the enemy's violent charge undaunted,
To hear this blasphemous monster, am all bathed
In a cold sweat; yet, like a mountain, he
Is no more shaken than Olympus is
When angry Boreas loads his double head
With sudden drifts of snow.

Enter Lady Allworth.

Lady Allworth.—Save you, my lord!

Disturb I not your privacy?

Lov.—No, good madam;

For your own sake, I'm glad you came no sooner,
Since this bold, bad man, Sir Giles Overreach,
Made such a plain discovery of himself.

And read this morning such a devilish matins,
That I should think it a sin next to his
Not to repeat it.

Lady A.—I ne'er pressed, my lord,
On others' privacy; yet, against my will,
Walking for health's sake, in the gallery here,
I was made,
So loud and vehement he was, partaker
Of his tempting offers.
But, my good lord, if I may use my freedom,
As to an honored friend—

Lov.—You lessen else
Your favor to me.

Lady A.—I dare, then, say thus:
However common men
Make sordid wealth the object and sole end
Of their industrious aims, 'twill not agree
With those of noble blood, of fame, and honor.

Lov.—Madam, 'tis confessed;
But what infer you from it?

Lady A.—This, my lord:
I allow the heir of Sir Giles Overreach, Margaret,
A maid well qualified, and the richest match
Our north part can make boast of; yet she cannot,
With all that she brings with her, stop their mouths
That never will forget who was her father;
Or that my husband Allworth's lands, and Wellborn's
(How wrung from both, needs no repetition),
Were real motives that more worked your lordship
To join your families, than her form and virtues;
You may conceive the rest.

Lov.—I do, good madam,
And long since have considered it. I know,
The sum of all that makes a just man happy,
Consists in the well choosing of his wife;
And 'tis my resolution ne'er to wed
With the rich Margaret, Overreach's daughter.

Lady A.—(Aside.) I am glad to hear this.
Why, then, my lord, pretend your marriage to her?

Dissimulation but ties false knots
On that straight line, by which you hitherto
Have measured all your actions.

Lov.—I make answer,
And aptly, with a question. Wherefore have you,
That, since your husband's death, have lived a strict
And chaste nun's life, on the sudden given yourself
To visits and entertainments? Think you, madam,
'Tis not grown public conference? or the favors
Which you so prodigally have thrown on Wellborn,
Incur not censure?

Lady A.—I'm innocent here; and, on my life, I swear,
My ends are good.

Lov.—So, on my soul, are mine
To Margaret:
And, since this friendly privacy does serve
As a fair offered means unto ourselves
To search each other further—you having shown
Your care of me, I, my respect to you—
Deny me not, I dare not yet say more,
An afternoon's discourse.

Lady A.—Affected coyness might deny your suit;
But, such your honor, frankness shall become me,
And bid my tongue avow my honest heart;
I shall attend your lordship.

Lov.—My heart thanks you.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

A Village. Enter Froth and Tapwell from the House.

Tapwell.—Undone, undone! This was your counsel Froth.

Froth.—Mine! I defy thee; did not Master Marrall—
He has marred all, I am sure—strictly command us.
On pain of Sir Giles Overreach's displeasure,
To turn the gentleman out of doors?

Tap.—'Tis true;
But now he's his uncle's darling; and has got

Master Justice Greedy, since he filled his belly,
At his commandment to do anything.
Woe, woe to us!

Froth.—He may prove merciful.

Tap.—Troth, we do not deserve it at his hands.

Froth.—Then, he knows all the passages of our house
As the receiving of stolen goods, and so forth.
When he was rogue Wellborn, no man would believe
him;

And then his information could not hurt us;
But now he is right worshipful again,
Who dares but doubt his testimony?

Tap.—Undone, undone! Methinks
I see thee, Froth, already in a cart;
And my hand hissing,
If I 'scape the halter, with the letter R
Printed upon it.

Froth.—Would that were the worst!
That were but nine days' wonder. As for credit,
We've none to lose; but we shall lose his custom;
And there's the devil of it.

Tap.—He has summoned all his creditors by the drum
'Tis said, he has found out such a "*new way*
To pay his old debts," as, 'tis very likely,
He shall be chronicled for it.

Froth.—But are you sure his worship
Comes this way to my lady's?
(Drum, and shouting of "Brave Master Well-
born!")

Tap.—Hark, I hear him.

Froth.—Be ready with your petition, and present it
To his good grace.

Enter Greedy, Wellborn in a rich habit, Marrall, Vintner,
Tailor, with other Creditors—Order, Furnace, Amble.
Tapwell and Froth, kneeling, deliver a Petition.

Wellborn.—How's this? petitioned too!
But note what miracles the payment of

A little trash, and a rich suit of clothes;
Can work upon these rascals! I shall be,
I think, Prince Wellborn.

Marrall.—When your worship's married,
You may be:—I know what I hope to see you.

Well.—Then look thou for advancement.

Mar.—To be known
Your worship's bailiff, is the mark I shoot at.

Well.—And thou shalt hit it.

Mar.—Pray you, sir, dispatch
These needy followers; and for my admittance,
(*Tapwell and Froth flattering Greedy.*)
Provided you'll defend me from Sir Giles,
Whose service I am weary of, I'll say something
You shall give thanks for.

Well.—Fear not Sir Giles.
(*Wellborn and Marrall retire, and converse apart.*)

Greedy.—Who?
Tapwell.—I remember; thy wife brought me,
Last new-year's tide, a couple of fat turkeys.

Tap.—And shall do, every Christmas, let your worship
But stand my friend now.

Gree.—How! with Master Wellborn?
I can do anything with him, on such terms.

(*Wellborn advances.*)
See you this honest couple? (*To Wellborn.*) They're
good souls
As ever drew out spigot. Have they not
A pair of honest faces?

Well.—I o'erheard you,
And the bribe be promised. You are cozened in 'em;
For, of all the scum that grew rich by my riots,
This, for a most unthankful knave, and this,
For a base quean and thief, have worst deserved me;
And therefore speak not for them. By your place,
You're rather to do me justice. Lend me your ear;
Forget his turkeys, and call in his license,
And every season I will send you venison,

To feast a mayor and corporation.

(Goes and converses with Marrall.)

Gree.—I'm changed o' the sudden in my opinion—Mum.

Come near. (To Tapwell and Froth.) Nearer, rascal!

And, now I view him better, did you e'er see

One look so like an arch knave? his very countenance

Should an understanding Judge but look upon him,

Would hang him, though he were innocent.

Tap. and Froth.—Worshipful sir—

Gree.—No; though the great Turk came instead of turkeys,

To beg my favor, I'm inexorable.

Thou'st an ill name; I here do damn thy license,

Forbidding thee ever to tap or draw;

For, instantly, I will, in mine own person,

Command the constable to pull down thy sign,

And do 't before I eat.

Froth.—No mercy?

Gree.—Vanish!—

If I show any, may my promised venison choke me!

Tap.—Unthankful knaves are ever so rewarded.

(Exit with Froth into the house.)

Well.—On, Master Greedy; I'll be with you at dinner.

Gree.—For heaven's sake, don't stay long;

'Tis almost ready.

(Exit.)

Well.—Speak; what are you?

Vintner.—A decayed vintner, sir.

That might have thrived, but that your worship broke
me

With trusting you with muscadine and eggs,

And five-pound suppers, with your after-drinkings,

When you lodged upon the Bankside.

Well.—I remember.

Fin.—I've not been hasty, nor e'er laid to arrest you;

And therefore, sir—

Well.—Thou art an honest fellow;

I'll set thee up again;

(To Marrall.) See his bill paid.

(Tailor advances.) What are you?

Tailor.—A tailor once, but now mere botcher.

I long time gave you credit for rich clothes;
But, your failing in payment,
I was removed from the shop-board, and confined
Under a stall.

Well.—(To Marrall.) See him paid; and botch no more.

Tail.—I ask no interest, sir.

Well.—Such tailors need not;

If their bills are paid in one and twenty years,
They're seldom losers. See these men discharged.

(Marrall motions to the Creditors to imply he will
do so.)

And since old debts are cleared by a new way,
A little bounty will not misbecome me;
There's something for you all.

(Throws purse to Creditors.)

All the Creditors.—Brave Master Wellborn!

(Drums and shouts. Exeunt Creditors.)

Well.—Leave me, good friends; attend upon your lady.

(Exeunt Amble, Furnace and Order.)

Now, Master Marrall, what's the weighty secret,
You promised to impart?

Mar.—Sir, time nor place

Allow me to relate each circumstance;
This only, in a word: I know Sir Giles
Will come upon you for security
For all the money which he now has lent you;
This you must not consent to.
As he grows in heat, as I am sure he will,
Be you but rough, and say he's in your debt
Ten times the sum, upon sale of your land;—
I'd a hand in 't, I speak it to my shame,—
When you were defeated of it.

Well.—That's forgiven.

Mar.—I shall deserve it: Then urge him to produce
The deed in which you passed it over to him,
Which, I know, he'll have about him, to deliver
To the Lord Lovell. I'll instruct you further,

As I wait on your worship. If I play not my prize
To your full content, and your uncle's much vexation,
Hang up Jack Marrall.

Well.—I rely upon thee.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

A room in Sir Giles' house. Enter Margaret, with a letter in her hand, and Allworth.

Allworth.—Whether to yield the first praise to my lord's
Unequalled self-denial, or your constant sweetness
I yet rest doubtful.

Margaret.—Give it to Lord Lovell;
For what in him was bounty, in me's duty.
I make but payment of a debt to which
My vows, in that high office registered,
Are faithful witnesses.

All.—'Tis true, my dearest;
Yet—when I call to mind how many fair ones
Make willful shipwreck of their faiths and oaths,
To fill the arms of greatness;
While you, with matchless virtue, thus hold out,
Spurning at honor, when it comes to court you—
I am so tender of your good, that faintly
I wish myself that right, you're pleased to do me.

Marg.—To me what's title, when content is wanting?
Or the smooth brow, and wealth,
Of a pleased sire that slaves me to his will;
And, so his vain ambition may be feasted
By my obedience, and he see me great,
Leaves to my soul nor faculties nor power
To make her own election?

All.—But the dangers
That follow the repulse—

Marg.—To me they're nothing;
Let Allworth love, I cannot be unhappy.
Suppose the worst—that, in his rage, he kill me;

A tear or two, by you dropped on my hearse,
In sorrow for my fate, will call back life
So far as but to say, that I die yours;
I then shall rest in peace.

All.—Heaven avert

Such trials of your true affection to me!
Nor will it unto you, that are all mercy,
Show so much rigor. But, since we must run
Such desperate hazards, let us do our best
To steer between 'em.

Marg.—Lord Lovell is our friend;

And though but a young actor, second me
In doing to the life what he has plotted.

Enter Sir Giles.

The end may yet prove happy. (*Aside.*) Now, my Allworth.

All.—(*Aside.*) To your letter, and put on a seeming anger.

Marg.—I'll pay my lord all debts due to his title;

And, when with terms not taking from his honor
He does solicit me, I shall gladly hear him;
But, in this peremptory, nay, commanding way,
To fix a time and place, without my knowledge,
A priest to tie the knot can ne'er be undone
Till death unloose it, is a confidence
In his lordship will deceive him.

All.—I hope better, good lady.

Marg.—Hope, sir, what you please; for me,

I must take a safe and secure course; I have
A father, and without his full consent,
Though all lords of the land kneeled for my favor,
I can grant nothing.

Sir Giles.—(*Aside.*) I like this obedience;

But whatsoever my lord writes, must and shall be
Accepted and embraced. Sweet Master Allworth,
You show yourself a true and faithful servant
To your good lord; he has a jewel of you.
How! frowning, Meg? Are these looks to receive
A messenger from my lord? What's this? give me it.

Marg.—A piece of arrogant paper!

Sir G.—(Reads.) "Fair mistress, from your servant learn, all joys

That we can hope for, if deferred, prove toys;
Therefore this instant, and in private, meet
A husband, that will gladly at your feet
Lay down his honors, tendering them to you
With all content, the church being paid her due."

Is this the arrogant piece of paper? fool!
Will you still be one? I' the name of madness, what
Could his good honor write more to content you?
Is there aught else to be wished, after these two
That are already offered? Marriage first,
And lawful pleasure after:—What would you more?

Marg.—Why, sir, I would be married like your daughter;
Not hurried away i' the night I know not whither,
Without all ceremony; no friends invited,
To honor the solemnity.

All.—An't please your honor,
For so before to-morrow I must style you,
My lord desires this privacy, in respect
His honorable kinsmen are far off,
And his desires to have it done, brook not
So long delay as to expect their coming;
And yet he stands resolved, with all due pomp,
To have his marriage at court celebrated,
When he has brought your honor up to London.

Sir G.—He tells you true; 'tis the fashion, on my knowledge;
Yet the good lord, to please your peevishness,
Must put it off, forsooth!

Marg.—I could be contented,
Were you but by, to do a father's part,
And give me in the church.

Sir G.—So my lord have you,
What do I care who gives you? Since my lord
Does purpose to be private, I'll not cross him.
I know not, Master Allworth, how my lord
May be provided, and therefore there's a purse

Of gold; 'twill serve this night's expense; to-morrow
I'll furnish him with any sums.

Use my ring to my chaplain; he is beneficed
At my manor of Got'em, and called Parson Willdo;
'Tis no matter for a license; I'll bear him out in 't.

Marg.—With your favor, sir—what warrant is your ring?
He may suppose I got that twenty ways,
Without your knowledge; and then, to be refused
Were such a stain upon me!—if you pleased, sir,
Your presence would do better.

Sir G.—Still perverse!
I say again, I will not cross my lord;
Yet I'll see you righted, too—paper and ink there!

All.—Sir, 'tis ready here.

Sir G.—I thank you. I can write, then, to my chaplain.
(Sits down and writes.)

All.—(Sits.) Sir, sir—
You may, if you please, leave out the name of my lord;
In respect he would be private, and only write—
Marry her to this gentleman.

Sir G.—Well advised.
'Tis done! Away!
(Gives Allworth the paper—both rise.)

My blessing? Girl, thou hast it!
Nay, no reply, begone—good Master Allworth,
This shall be the best night's work you ever made.

All.—I hope so, sir.

(Exeunt Margaret and Allworth.)

Sir G.—Now all's cock-sure—
Methinks I hear already knights and ladies
Say, Sir Giles Overreach, how is it with
Your honorable daughter?
My ends, my ends are compassed! Then, for Wellborn
And the lands—were he once married to the widow—
I have him here.

(Touching his forehead with his finger.)
I can scarce contain myself,
I am so full of joy; nay, joy all over!

(Exit.)

ACT V. SCENE I.

The hall in Lady Allworth's house. Lovell and Lady Allworth seated at table.

Lady Allworth.—By this you know how strong the motives were,

That did, my lord, induce me to dispense
A little with my gravity, to advance
The plots and projects of the downtrod Wellborn.

Lovell.—What you intended, madam,

For the poor gentleman hath found good success;
For, as I understand, his debts are paid,
And he once more furnished for fair employment;
But all the arts that I have used, to raise
The fortunes of, your joy and mine, young Allworth,
Stand yet in supposition, though I hope well;
For the young lovers are in wit more pregnant
Than their years can promise.

Lady A.—Though my wishes

Are with yours, my lord; yet give me leave to fear
The building, though well-grounded. To deceive
Sir Giles, that's both a lion and a fox
In his proceedings, were a work beyond
The strongest undertakers; not the trial
Of two weak innocents.

Lov.—Despair not, madam;

Hard things are compassed oft by easy means.
The cunning statesman that believes he fathoms
The counsels of all kingdoms on the earth,
Is by simplicity oft over-reached.

Lady A.—May he be so!

The young ones have my warmest wishes with them.

Lov.—Oh, gentle lady, prove as kind to me!

You've deigned to hear, now grant my honest suit,
And, if you may be won to make me happy,
But join your hand to mine, and that shall be
A solemn contract.

Lady A.—I were blind to my own good,
Should I refuse it; yet, my lord, receive me
As such a one, the study of whose whole life
Shall know no other object but to please you.

Lov.—If I return not, with all tenderness,
Equal respect to you, may I die wretched!

Lady A.—There needs no protestation, my lord,
To her that cannot doubt.

Enter Wellborn.

You're welcome, sir;
Now you look like yourself.

Wellborn.—And will continue
Such, in my free acknowledgment that I am
Your creature, madam—and will never hold
My life mine own, when you please to command it.

Lov.—It is a thankfulness that well becomes you.

Lady A.—For me, I am happy
That my endeavors prospered. Saw you of late
Sir Giles, your uncle?

Well.—I heard of him, madam,
By his minister, Marrall. He's grown into strange pas-
sions
About his daughter; this last night, he looked for
Your lordship at his house; but, missing you,
And Margaret not appearing, he is coming
To seek her even here at Lady Allworth's.
His wise head is much perplexed and troubled.

Lov.—I hope my project took.

Lady A.—I strongly hope it.

Sir Giles.—(Without.) Ha! find my daughter, thou huge lump
of nothing,

I'll bore thine eyes out, else.

Well.—May it please your lordship,
For some ends of mine own, but to withdraw
A little out of sight, though not of hearing,
You may, perhaps, have sport.

Lov.—You shall direct me.

(Exit.)

Sir G.—(Without.) Idiot! booby! booby!

Marrall.—(Without.) Oh, oh, oh!

Sir G.—(Without.) I shall sol-fa you, rogue!

Mar.—(Without.) Sir, for what cause
Do you use me thus?

Enter Sir Giles, with distracted looks, driving in Marrall before
him.

Sir G.—Cause, slave! Why, I am angry,
And thou a subject only fit for beating,
And so to cool my choler. Look to the writing;
Let but the seal be broke upon the box,
That has slept in my cabinet these three years,
I'll rack thy soul for 't.

Mar.—(Aside.) I may yet cry quittance;
Though now I suffer, and dare not resist.

Sir G.—Lady, by your leave; did you see my daughter,
lady?
And the lord her husband? Are they in your house?
If they are, discover, that I may bid 'em joy;
And, as an entrance to your place of honor,
See you, on her left hand, bending down low,
When she nods on you; which you must receive
As a special favor.

Lady A.—When I know, Sir Giles,
Her state requires such ceremony, I shall pay it;
But, in the meantime,
I give you to understand, I neither know
Nor care where her honor is.

Sir G.—When you once see her
Led and supported by the lord her husband,
You'll be taught better. Nephew—

Well.—Well?

Sir G.—No more!

Well.—'Tis all I owe you.

Sir G.—Have your redeemed rags
Made you thus insolent?

Well.—Insolent to you!

Why, what are you, sir, pray, unless in years,
More than myself?

Sir G.—(Aside.) His fortune swells him:—

'Tis rank—he's married—

Sir, in calm language, though I seldom use it,

(Going to Lady Allworth.)

I am familiar with the cause that makes you
Bear up thus bravely; there's a certain buzz
Of a stolen marriage—do you hear?—of a stolen marriage;

In which, 'tis said, there's somebody hath been cozened—
I name no parties.

Well.—Well, sir, and what follows?

(Lady Allworth turns away in astonishment.)

Sir G.—Marry this; since you are so peremptory; remember,

Upon mere hope of your great match, I lent you

Some certain moneys; put me in good security,

And suddenly, by mortgage or by statute,

Of some of your new possessions, or I'll have you

Dragged in your lavender robes to the gaol; you know
me,

And therefore do not trifle.

Well.—Can you be

So cruel to your nephew, now he's in

The way to rise? Was this the courtesy

You did me, in pure love, and no ends else?

Sir G.—End me no ends! Engage the whole estate

And force your spouse to sign it—you shall have

Three or four thousand more, to roar and swagger,

And revel in drunken taverns.

Well.—And beg after—

Mean you not so?

Sir G.—My thoughts are mine, and free.

Shall I have security?

Well.—No, indeed, you shall not;

Nor bond, nor bill, nor bare acknowledgment—

Your great looks fright not me.

Sir G.—But my deeds shall.

(They draw.)

Outbraved!

Lady A.—Help! murder! murder!

Enter Amble, Watchall, Order and two Servants, with drawn swords.

Well.—Let him come on,

Armed with his cut-throat practices to guard him,
With all his wrongs and injuries about him;
The right that I bring with me will defend me,
And punish his extortion.

Sir G.—That I had thee
But single in the field!

Lady A.—You may; but make not
My house your quarrelling scene.

Sir G.—Were't in a church,
By heaven and hell, I'll do 't.

(Lady Allworth turns away.)

Mar.—(To Wellborn.) Now, put him to
The showing of the deed.

Well.—This rage is vain, sir;
For fighting, fear not, you shall have your hands full
Upon the least incitement; and—whereas
You charge me with a debt of moneys to you—
If there be law, howe'er you have no conscience,
Either restore my land, or I'll recover
A debt, that's truly due to me from you,
In value ten times more than what you challenge.

Sir G.—I in thy debt! Oh, impudence! did I not purchase
The land left by thy father, that rich land
That had continued in Wellborn's name?

Enter two of Sir Giles' servants with a box.

Twenty descents, which, like a riotous fool,
Thou didst make sale of? (To Servants.) Oh, you're
come at last—

Is not here inclosed
The deed that does confirm it mine?

Mar.—Now, now!

(*Lady Allworth advances.*)

Well.—I do acknowledge none; I ne'er passed over
Any such land; I grant, for a year or two,
You had it in trust; which, if you do discharge,
Surrendering the possession, you shall ease
Yourself and me of chargeable suits in law;
Which, if you prove not honest, as I doubt it,
Must of necessity follow.

Lady A.—In my judgment,
He does advise you well.

Sir G.—Good! good! Conspire
With your new husband, lady; second him
In his dishonest practices; but when
This manor is extended to my use,
You'll speak an humbler key, and sue for favor.

Lady A.—Never; do not hope it.

Well.—Let despair first seize me.

Sir G.—Yet, to shut up thy mouth, and make thee give
Thyself the lie, the loud lie, I draw out
The precious evidence; if thou canst forswear
Thy hand and seal, and make a forfeit of
Thy ears to the pillory—

(Two Servants place the box on the table. *Sir Giles*
unlocks it and takes out the deed.)

See! here's that will make
My interest clear. Ha!

Lady A.—(Looking over his shoulder.) A fair, blank skin
of parchment!

Well.—Indented, I confess, and labels, too;
But neither wax, nor words. How! thunderstruck?
Is this your precious evidence? this, that makes
Your interest clear?

Sir G.—I am overwhelmed with wonder!
What prodigy is this? what subtle devil
Hath razed out the inscription? the wax
Turned into dust?—
Do you deal with witches, rascal?

There is a statute for you, which will bring
Your neck in a hempen circle; yes, there is;—
And, now 'tis better thought for, cheater, know,
This juggling shall not save you.

Well.—To save thee

Would beggar the stock of mercy.

(Retires with Lady Allworth up the stage.)

Sir G.—Marrall—Marrall!—

Mar.—Sir?

Sir G.—Though the witnesses are dead, your testimony
Helped with an oath or two; and, for thy master,
Thy liberal master, my good, honest servant,
I know thou wilt swear anything, to dash
This cunning sleight;—
The deed being drawn, too,
By thee, my careful Marrall, and delivered
When thou wast present, will make good my title;
Wilt thou not swear this?

Mar.—I! No, I assure you;

(Breaks from him.)

I have a conscience, not seared up like yours;

I know no deeds.

Sir G.—Wilt thou betray me?

(Drawing his sword.)

Mar.—Keep him

(Wellborn opposes him.)

From using of his hands, I'll use my tongue
To his no little torment.

Sir G.—Mine own varlet

Rebel against me!

Mar.—Yes, and uncase you, too;

The idiot, the patch, the slave, the booby,
Your drudge, can now anatomize you, and lay open
All your black plots, and level with the earth
Your hill of pride; and shake,
Nay, pulverize, the walls you think defend you.

Sir G.—Oh, that I had thee in my gripe, I'd tear thee
Joint after joint!

Mar.—I know you are a tearer;

But I'll have first your fangs pared off, and then
Come nearer to you (Sir Giles retreats in despair) when
I have discovered,
And made it good before the judge, what ways
And devilish practices you used to cozen with.

Well.—All will come out.

Sir G.—(Advancing.) But that I will live, rogue, to torture
thee,

And make thee wish, and kneel, in vain, to die,
These swords, that keep thee from me, should fix here,
Although they made my body but one wound,
But I would reach thee; I play the fool,
And make my anger but ridiculous.
There will be a time and place, there will be cowards,
When you shall feel what I dare do.

Well.—I think so;

You dare do any ill; yet want true valor,
To be honest and repent.

Sir G.—They're words, I know not,

Nor e'er will learn. Patience, the beggar's virtue,
Shall find no harbor here.

Enter two of Sir Giles' Servants.

Lady A.—Whom have we here?

Sir G.—After these storms,

At length a calm appears. My chaplain comes—

Enter Parson Willdo, with a letter in his hand.

Welcome, most welcome!

There's comfort in thy looks! Is the deed done?
Is my daughter married? Say but so, my chaplain,
And I am tame.

Willdo.—Married? Yes, I assure you.

Sir G.—Then vanish all sad thoughts!

My doubts and fears are in the titles drowned
Of my honorable, my right honorable daughter.
Now, you that plot against me,

And hoped to trip my heels up, that contemned me,
Think on 't and tremble.

(Music.)

Enter Lovell behind.

They come! I hear the music.
A lane there for my lord!

Well.—This sudden heat
May yet be cooled, sir.

Sir G.—Make way there for my lady and my lord!

(Music.)

Enter two of Sir Giles' Servants, Margaret and Allworth.

Marg.—(Kneels.) Sir, first your pardon, then your blessing.
with

Your full allowance of the choice I've made—
Not to dwell
Too long on words—this is my husband.

Sir G.—How!

Allworth.—So, I assure you; all the rites of marriage,
With every circumstance, are past;
And for right honorable son-in-law, you may say,
Your dutiful daughter.

Sir G.—(Advancing hastily upon Willdo.) Devil! Are they
married?

Well.—Do a father's part, and say, Heaven give them joy!

Sir G.—Confusion and ruin! Speak, and speak quickly!
Or thou art dead.

(Seizes him.)

Will.—They're married.

Sir G.—Thou hadst better
Have made a contract with the king of fiends,
Than these. My brain turns!

Will.—Why this rage to me?
Is not this your letter, sir? and these the words—
"Marry her to this gentleman?"

Sir G.—It cannot;
Nor will I e'er believe it, 'sdeath! I will not,—
That I, who never left a print

Where I have trod, for the most curious search
 To trace my footsteps, should be gulled by children,
 Baffled and fooled, and all my hopes and labors
 Defeated and made void.

Well.—As it appears,
 You are so, my grave uncle.

(Willdo retires.)

Sir G.—Village nurses
 Revenge their wrongs with curses; I'll not waste
 A syllable; but thus I take the life
 Which, wretched, I gave to thee.
 (Advances to kill Margaret.)

Lov.—(Stopping him.) Hold, for your own sake!
 If charity to your daughter have quite left you.
 Will you do an act, though in your hopes lost here,
 Can leave no hope for peace or rest hereafter?
 Consider; at the best, you're but a man,
 And cannot so create your aims but that
 They may be crossed.

Sir G.—Lord! thus I spit at thee,
 And at thy counsel; and again desire thee—
 As thou art a soldier—if thy valor
 Dares show itself where multitude and example
 Lead not the way, let's quit the house, and change
 Six words in private.

Lov.—I am ready.

Lady A.—Stay, sir!
 Contest with one distracted?

Well.—You'll grow like him,
 Should you answer his vain challenge.

Sir G.—Are you pale?
 Borrow their helps; though Hercules call it odds,
 I'll stand 'gainst all, as I am, hemmed in thus.—
 Say, there were a squadron
 Of pikes, lined through with shot, when I am mounted
 Upon my injuries, shall I fear to charge 'em?
 No; I'll through the battalia, and, that routed,
 I'll fall to execution. (Attempts to draw his sword.)
 Ha! I'm feeble;

Some undone widow sits upon mine arm,
And takes away the use of't; and my sword,
Glued to my scabbard with wronged orphans' tears,
Will not be drawn.—

Ha! what are these? (Staggers back.) Sure, hangmen,
That come to bind my hands, and then to drag me
Before the judgment seat.—Now they are new shapes,
And do appear like Furies, with steel whips
To scourge my ulcerous soul. Shall I then fall
Ingloriously, and yield?—No; spite of fate,
I will be forced to hell, like to myself.
Though you were legions of accurséd spirits,
Thus would I fly among you.—

(Rushes madly toward his daughter, and falls exhausted; two servants raise him up; he somewhat recovers, looks wildly round, then, fixing his eyes with horrible reproach upon his daughter, drops his head upon his bosom, and is borne off by the two servants.)

Mar.—Was it not a rare trick,

 An't please your worship, to make the deed nothing?

Well.—What arts didst use to raze out the conveyance?

Mar.—Certain minerals,

 Incorporated in the ink and wax.

Besides, he gave me nothing; but still fed me
With hopes and blows.

If it please your worship

To call to memory, this mad beast once caused me

To urge you, or to hang, or drown yourself:

I'll do the like to him, if you command me.

Well.—You are a rascal; and he that dares be false

To a master, though unjust, will very hardly

Be true to any other. Begone,

And look not for

Reward or favor from me, till thou'st learned

To mend thy wicked life.

(Exit Marrall.)

Marg.—Oh, my poor father!

All.—Nay, weep not, dearest: though it show your piety,

 What is decreed by heaven, we cannot alter.

Lov.—And heaven here gives a precedent to teach us
That, when men leave religion, and turn atheists,
Their own abilities leave them.—Pray you, take comfort—
(To Margaret.)

I will endeavor you shall be his guardians
In his distractions—and for your land, Wellborn,
I'll be an umpire
Between you and this, the undoubted heir
Of Sir Giles Overreach: for me, here's the anchor
That I must fix on. (To Lady Allworth.)

All.—What you shall determine,
My lord, we will allow of.

Well.—'Tis the language
That I speak, too; but there is something else
Beside the repossession of my land
And payment of my debts that I must practice:
I had a reputation, but 'twas lost
In my loose course; and until I redeem it
Some noble way, I am but half made up.
It is a time of action: if your lordship
Will please to confer a company upon me
In your command, I doubt not, in my service
To my king and country, but I shall do something
That may make me right again.

Lov.—Your suit is granted,
And you loved for the motion.

Well.—(To the audience.) Nothing, then,
Now wants but your allowance; and in that
Our all is comprehended: which, if you
Grant willingly, as a fair favor due
To the poet's and our labors, as you may—
For we despair not, gentlemen, of the play—
You may expect, the grace you show to-night,
Will teach us how to act, our poets how to write.



*In the play of The Virgin Martyr, Dorothea is
a young girl who is the daughter of a king, and
her page, Angelo, stands by in the guise of an angel,
and she is miraculously preserved from harm.*

MARTYRDOM OF DOROTHEA
After an original painting by G. Ferrier

British Drama

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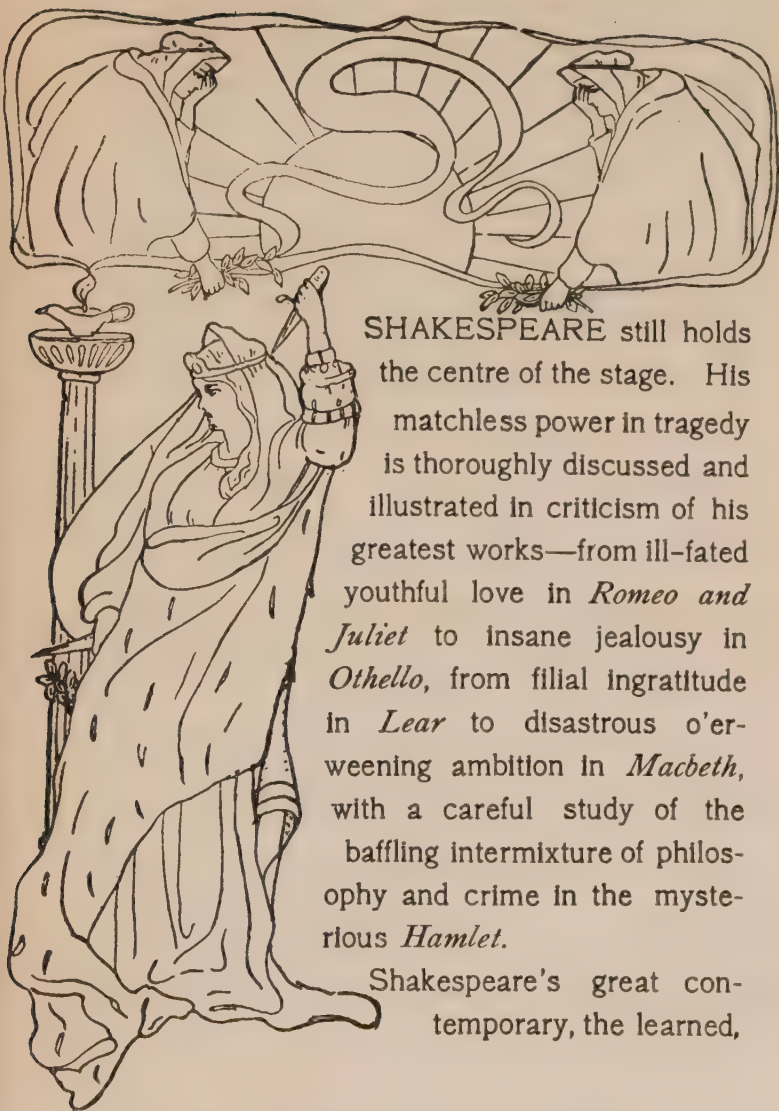
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Prologue



SHAKESPEARE still holds the centre of the stage. His matchless power in tragedy is thoroughly discussed and illustrated in criticism of his greatest works—from ill-fated youthful love in *Romeo and Juliet* to insane jealousy in *Othello*, from filial ingratitude in *Lear* to disastrous o'erweening ambition in *Macbeth*, with a careful study of the baffling intermixture of philosophy and crime in the mysterious *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare's great contemporary, the learned,

PROLOGUE

conceited but powerful Ben Jonson, is shown to have succeeded best in his comedies, because there his native farce was not overweighted by his knowledge of the ancient classics. The peculiar character of his dramatic talent is well shown in *Every Man in his Humor*, which is here presented in full. But the glorious Elizabethan age abounded in comic and tragic dramatists of high order. We pass on to the unique literary partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher, and offer as specimen of their joint production the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, in which, as in *Hamlet*, a play is presented inside a play, though in this instance a homely comedy, which must have excited the risibles of London citizens. In the *Two Noble Kinsmen* Fletcher is thought by some critics to have collaborated with Shakespeare,

The flourishing period of the English drama extended through the reign of the pedantic James I. into the troublous times of Charles I., when, at the opening of the Parliamentary war, the theatres were closed by the Puritans who had risen into power. Among the latest dramatists of this period was the skilful Massinger, whose best comedy was

PROLOGUE

given in the previous volume, and whose merits are here discussed.

With the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, the ban on the theatres was removed. But it was soon found that the entire character of the drama was changed. The royalist exiles had become accustomed to the polished licentiousness of the French stage, and demanded something similiar from English playwrights now free to display their ability. The latter in their clumsy effort to respond overdid the matter, and produced plays which offended public taste by their grossness. Tragedy as well as comedy was smirched with filth. Even the glorious Dryden, as he afterward confessed, stooped to cater to the taste of the prurient playgoers. His versatile genius was not so well adapted to the drama as to satire. Yet in his "heroic plays," as he called his rhymed tragedies, he approached the level of Ben Jonson. Singular as it may appear, one of his successes was in recasting Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* into *All for Love*, but his attempt to transform part of Milton's *Paradise Lost* into an opera was a ridiculous failure. Otway shared with Dryden the honors of the classical school of

PROLOGUE

that time, and his *Venice Preserved* is occasionally seen on the stage.

Sketches of Wycherley, Congreve, Sir John Vanbrugh, Farquhar and other dramatists of the later Restoration period, together with mention of and description of their more important plays, are found in the volume, which concludes with the complete text of Rev. John Home's tragedy of *Douglas*, though it really belongs to a little later period.

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English Drama.

PART II.

I.

Shakespeare's Tragedies.

Shakespearean tragedy ranks so far above all other forms of tragic art, so far even above the classic drama, that no comparison is possible. Nowhere else is displayed with equal completeness the struggle between will and obstacle, character and circumstance. Nowhere is mirrored with equal power and variety the working of those passions by the mastery of which man controls his doom. Shakespeare opened to modern tragedy a range of hitherto unknown breadth and depth and height, and emancipated the national drama in its noblest forms from limits to which it will never again be restricted.

Characterization.

For his knowledge of mankind Shakespeare has been called the master of the human heart. His characters

neither do nor say anything merely on the spectator's account, and yet, without any subsidiary explanation, he communicates to his audience the gift of looking into their minds. As Goethe has said, his characters resemble watches with crystalline plates and cases, which, while they point out the hours as correctly as other watches, enable us to perceive the inward springs whereby this is accomplished. Nothing, however, is more foreign to Shakespeare than the anatomical style of exhibition, laboriously enumerating all the motives by which a man is determined to act. After all, a man acts in a certain manner, not through external influences, but because he is so; and what each man is, that Shakespeare reveals to us, demanding and obtaining our belief, even for what is singular and deviates from the ordinary course of nature. Never, perhaps, was there so comprehensive a talent for characterization. It not only grasps every diversity of rank, age and sex down to the lisping of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot, speak and act with equal truthfulness; not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations, and portray with the greatest accuracy the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in the wars with the English, of the English themselves during a great part of their history, the cultivated society of the day, and the rude barbarism of a Norman fore-time; his human characters have not only such depth and individuality that they do not admit of being classed under common names, and are inexhaustible even in conception; but he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits, calls up the midnight ghost,

exhibits before us the witches with their unhallowed rites, peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs; and these beings, though existing only in the imagination, nevertheless possess such truth and consistency that even with such misshapen abortions as Caliban, he extorts the assenting conviction that were there such beings, they would so conduct themselves. In a word, as he carries a bold and pregnant fancy into the kingdom of nature, on the other hand, he carries nature into the regions of fancy, which lie beyond the confines of reality.

Passion and Pathos.

Equally remarkable is his exhibition of passion, taking this word in its broadest significance, as including every mental condition, every tone, from indifference, content or mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of their anterior states. His passions do not stand at the same height, from first to last, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints, with inimitable veracity, the gradual advance from the first origin; "he gives," as Lessing says, "a living picture of all the slight and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls, of all the imperceptible advantages which it gains there, of all the stratagems by which it makes every other passion subservient to itself, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions."

The objection that Shakespeare wounds our feelings

by the open display of the most disgusting moral obliquity, unmercifully harrows up the mind, and even tortures us by the exhibition of the most hateful spectacles, is one of grave importance. He has, in fact, never varnished over wild and bloodthirsty passions with a pleasing exterior, never clothed crime and want of principle with a false show of greatness of soul; but in that respect he is rather to be commended than censured. The reading, and still more the sight, of some of his pieces, may not be advisable for weak nerves, any more than was the *Prometheus* of Æschylus; but is the poet, who can only reach an important object by a bold and hazardous flight, to be checked by considerations for such persons? If the effeminacy of the present day is to serve as a general standard of what tragical composition may properly exhibit to human nature, we shall be forced to set very narrow limits, indeed, to art, and the hope of anything like powerful effect must at once and forever be renounced. If we wish to have a grand purpose, we must also have the means to correspond, and our nerves ought in some measure to accommodate themselves to painful impressions, if, by way of requital, our mind is thereby elevated and strengthened. Fortunately for his art, Shakespeare lived in an age extremely susceptible of noble and tender impressions, but which had yet inherited enough of the firmness of a vigorous olden time, not to shrink with dismay from strong and forcible painting. We have lived to see tragedies of which the catastrophe consists in the swoon of an enamored princess; if Shakespeare falls occasionally into the opposite extreme, it is a noble error, originating in the

fullness of a gigantic strength. And this tragical Titan, who storms the heavens and threatens to tear the world from off its hinges, who, more terrible than Æschylus, makes our hair to stand on end and congeals our blood with horror, possessed at the same time the insinuating loveliness of the sweetest poesy; he toys with love like a child, and his songs die away on the ear like melting sighs. He unites in his soul the utmost elevation and the utmost depth; and the most opposite and even apparently irreconcilable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet; in strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a guardian spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child.

If the delineation of all his characters, separately considered, is inimitably bold and correct, he surpasses even himself in so combining and contrasting them that they serve to bring out each other's peculiarities. This is the very perfection of dramatic characterization, for we can never estimate a man's true worth if we consider him altogether abstractedly by himself; we must see him in his relations with others, and it is here that most dramatic poets are deficient. Shakespeare makes each of his principal characters the glass in which the others are reflected, and by like means enables us to discover what could not be immediately revealed to us. What in others is most profound is with him but surface. Ill advised should we be, were we always to take men's declarations respecting themselves and others for sterling

coin. Ambiguity of design he makes to overflow with the most praiseworthy principles, and sage maxims are not infrequently put in the mouth of stupidity, to show how easily such commonplace truisms may be acquired. Nobody ever painted so truthfully as he has done the facility of self-deception, the half self-conscious hypocrisy toward ourselves, with which even noble minds attempt to disguise the inevitable influence of selfish motives in human nature. This secret irony of characterization is one of his elements of strength; but it is the grave of enthusiasm. We arrive at it only after we have had the misfortune to see human nature through and through, as Shakespeare did, and when no choice remains but to adopt the melancholy truth that "no virtue or greatness is altogether pure and genuine," or the dangerous error that "the highest perfection is attainable."

Romeo and Juliet.

Between tragedy and comedy the transition is often but slightly marked. Thus *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* differ but little from most of Shakespeare's comedies in their ingredients and treatment—it is simply the direction of the whole that gives them the stamp of tragedy. *Romeo and Juliet* is a picture of love and its pitiable fate in a world whose atmosphere is too sharp for this, the tenderest blossom of human life. Two beings created for each other feel mutual love at the first glance; every consideration disappears before the irresistible impulse to live for one another; under circumstances hostile in the highest degree to their union, they unite themselves

by a secret marriage, relying simply on the protection of an invisible power. Untoward incidents following in rapid succession, their heroic constancy is within a few days put to the proof, till, forcibly separated from each other, by a voluntary death they are united in the grave to meet again in another world.

All this is to be found in the beautiful story which was told long before Shakespeare's day, and which, however simply told, will always excite a tender sympathy; but it was reserved for Shakespeare to join in one ideal picture purity of heart with warmth of imagination; sweetness and dignity of manners with passionate intensity of feeling. Under his handling, it has become a glorious song of praise on that inexpressible feeling which ennobles the soul and gives to it its highest sublimity, and which elevates even the senses into soul, while at the same time it is a melancholy elegy on its inherent and imparted frailty; it is at once the apotheosis and the obsequies of love. It appears here a heavenly spark that, as it descends to the earth, is converted into the lightning flash, which almost in the same moment sets on fire and consumes the mortal being on whom it lights. All that is most intoxicating in the odor of a southern spring, all that is languishing in the song of the nightingale or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, all alike breathe forth from this poem. But even more rapidly than the earliest blossoms of youth and beauty decay does it, from the first timidly bold declaration and modest return of love, hurry on to unlimited passion, to an irrevocable union; and then hasten, amid alternating storms of rapture and despair, to the fate

of the two lovers, who yet appear enviable in their hard lot, for their love survives them, and by their death they have obtained an endless triumph over every separating power. The sweetest and the bitterest love and hatred, festive rejoicings and dark forebodings, tender embraces and sepulchral horrors, the fullness of life and self-annihilation, are here all brought close to each other; and yet these contrasts are so blended into a unity of impression, that the echo which the whole leaves in the mind resembles a single but endless sigh.

The first scenes of nearly every play of Shakespeare are remarkable for the skill with which they prepare the mind for all the after scenes. We do not see the succession of scenes; the catastrophe is unrevealed; but we look into a dim and distant prospect, and by what is in the foreground we can form a general notion of the landscape that will be presented to us, as the clouds roll away and the sun lights up its wild mountains or its fertile valleys. When Sampson and Gregory enter "armed with swords and bucklers"—when we hear "a dog of the house of Montague moves me"—we know that these are not common servants, and live not in common times; with them the excitement of party spirit does not rise into strong passion—it presents its ludicrous side. They quarrel like angry curs, who snarl, yet are afraid to bite. But the "furious Tybalt" in a moment shows us that these hasty quarrels cannot have peaceful endings. The strong arm of authority suspends the affray, but the spirit of enmity is not put down. The movement of this scene is as rapid as the quarrel itself. It produces the effect upon the mind of

something which startles; but the calm immediately succeeds. Benvolio's speech—

Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,

at once shows us that we are entering into the region of high poetry. Coleridge remarks that the succeeding speech of old Montague exhibits the poetical aspect of the play even more strikingly:

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew.

It is remarkable that the speech thus commencing, which contains twenty lines as highly wrought as anything in Shakespeare, is not in the first copy of this play. The experience of the artist taught him where to lay on the poetical coloring brighter and brighter. How beautifully these lines prepare us for the appearance of Romeo—the now musing, abstracted Romeo—the Romeo who, like the lover of Chaucer,

Solitary was ever alone,
And walking all the night, making moan.

The love of Romeo was unrequited love. It was a sentiment rather than a passion—a love that solaced itself in antithetical conceits upon its own misery, and would draw consolation from melancholy associations. It was love without the “true Promethean fire,” but it was a fit preparation for what was to follow. The dialogue between Capulet and Paris prepares us for Juliet—the “hopeful lady of his earth,” who

Hath not seen the change of fourteen years.

The old man does not think her "ripe to be a bride;" but we are immediately reminded of the precocity of nature under a southern sun, by another magical touch of poetry, which tells us of youth and freshness—of summer in "April"—of "fresh female buds" breathing the fragrance of opening flowers. Juliet at length comes. We see the submissive and gentle girl; but the garrulity of the nurse carries us back even to the

Prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.

Neither Juliet nor Romeo had rightly read their own hearts. He was sighing for a shadow—she fancied that she could subject her feelings to the will of others:

But no more deep will I endart mine eye,
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

The preparation for their first interview goes forward; Benvolio has persuaded Romeo to go to Capulet's feast. There is a slight pause in the action, but how gracefully is it filled up! Mercutio comes upon the scene, and is placed by the side of Romeo, to contrast with him, but also to harmonize. The poetry of Mercutio is that of fancy; the poetry of Romeo is that of imagination. The wit of Mercutio is the overflow of animal spirits, occasionally polluted, like a spring pure from the well-head, by the soil over which it passes; the wit of Romeo is somewhat artificial, and scarcely self-sustained—it is the unaccustomed play of the intellect when the passions "have come to the clenching point,"

but it is under control, it has no exuberance which, like the wit of Mercutio, admits the coloring of the sensual and the sarcastic.

The very first words of Romeo show the change that has come o'er him. He went into that "hall in Capulet's house" fearing

Some consequence yet hanging in the stars.

He had "a soul of lead"—he would be "a candle-holder and look on." But he has seen Juliet; and with what gorgeous images has that sight filled his imagination!

Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.

We have now the poetry of passion bursting upon us in its purple light.

The lovers show the intensity of their abandonment to an overmastering will. "They see only themselves in the universe." That is the true moral of their fate. But, even under the direst calamity, they catch at the one joy which is left—the short meeting before the parting. And what a parting that is! Here again comes the triumph of the beautiful over the merely tragic. They are once more calm. Their love again breathes of all the sweet sights and sounds in a world of beauty. They are parting, but the almost happy Juliet says:

It is not yet near day:—
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo, who sees the danger of delay, is not deceived:

It was the lark, the herald of the morn.

Then what a burst of poetry follows!—

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountains' tops.

Note the exquisite display of womanly tenderness in Juliet, which hurries from the forgetfulness of joy in her husband's presence to apprehension for his safety. After this scene we are almost content to think, as Romeo fancied he thought:

Come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy.

The sorrow does come upon poor Juliet with redoubled force. The absolute father, the unyielding mother, the treacherous nurse—all hurrying her into a loathed marriage—might drive one less resolved to the verge of madness. But from this moment her love has become heroism. She sees

No pity sitting in the clouds—

she rejects her nurse—she resolves to deceive her parents. This scene brings out her character in its strongest and most beautiful relief.

The final catastrophe comes. They have paid the penalty of the fierce hatreds that were engendered around them, and of their own precipitancy; but their misfortunes and their loves have healed the enmities of which they were the victims. The part of Juliet, it may be remarked, though one of the finest of all Shakespearean characters, is one of the most difficult

OTHELLO

From an original fairling by Josiah Bayly

OTHELLO.—*I must weep!*
But they are cruel tears ; this sorrow's heavenly ;
It strikes where it doth love.

OTHELLO.—SHAKESPEARE.



to act, and on it many young and aspiring actresses have been shipwrecked—women who would fain begin at the top of the histrionic ladder.

Othello.

In *Othello* is a strong Rembrandtesque picture, in contrast to the summer dawn, rich in varied hues of the composition above described. The Moor—under which name was originally meant a baptized Saracen of the northern coast of Africa—has been invested with qualities not common to the race from which he claims descent. We recognize in Othello something of the wild nature of that glowing zone which generates the most ravenous beasts of prey and the most deadly poisons, tamed only in appearance by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honor and by nobler and milder manners. His jealousy is not the jealousy of the heart, which is compatible with the tenderest feeling and adoration of the beloved object; it is of that sensual kind which, in burning climes, has given birth to the disgraceful confinement of women and many other unnatural usages. A drop of this poison flows in his veins and sets his whole blood in the wildest ferment. The Moor seems noble, frank, confiding, grateful for the love shown him; and he is all this, and, moreover, a hero who spurns at danger, a worthy leader of an army, a faithful servant of the state; but the mere physical force of passion puts to flight in one moment all his acquired and merely habitual virtues, and gives the upper hand to the savage over the moral man. He suffers in his dual nature, in the

higher and the lower sphere into which his being was divided.

While the Moor bears the color of suspicion and deceit only on his visage, Iago is black within. He haunts Othello like his evil genius, and with his light, but therefore the more dangerous insinuations, he leaves him no rest; it is as if by means of an unfortunate affinity, this influence was by necessity more powerful over him than the voice of his good angel, Desdemona. A more artful villain than Iago was never portrayed; he spreads his nets with a skill which nothing can escape. The repugnance inspired by his aims becomes tolerable from the attention of the spectators being directed to his means; these furnish endless employment to the understanding. Cool, discontented and morose, arrogant where he dare be so, but humble and insinuating when it suits his purpose, he is a complete master in the art of dissimulation. Accessible only to selfish emotions, he is thoroughly skilled in rousing the passions of others, and of availing himself of every opening which they give him; he is as excellent an observer of men as anyone can be who is unacquainted with higher motives of action from his own experience; there is always some truth in his malicious observations on them. He does not merely pretend an obdurate incredulity as to the virtue of women; he actually entertains it; and this, too, falls in with his whole way of thinking, and makes him the more fit for the execution of his purpose. As in everything he sees merely the hateful side, he dissolves in the rudest manner the charm which the imagination casts over the relation between the two sexes; he does

so for the purpose of revolting Othello's senses, whose heart otherwise might easily have convinced him of Desdemona's innocence.

This may serve as an excuse for the numerous expressions in the speeches of Iago from which modesty shrinks. If Shakespeare had written in our days he would not, perhaps, have dared to hazard them; and yet this would certainly have greatly injured the truth of his picture. Desdemona is a sacrifice without blemish. She is not, it is true, a high ideal representation of sweetness and enthusiastic passion like Juliet; full of simplicity, softness and humility, and so innocent that she can hardly form to herself an idea of the possibility of infidelity; but she seems calculated to make the most yielding and tender of wives. The female propensity wholly to resign itself to a foreign destiny has led her into the only fault of her life—that of marrying without her father's consent. Her choice seems wrong, and yet she has been gained over to Othello by that which induces the female to honor in man her protector and guide—admiration of his determined heroism and compassion for the sufferings which he had undergone. With great art it is so contrived that, from the very circumstance that the possibility of a suspicion of her own purity of motive never once enters her mind, she is the less reserved in her solicitations for Cassio, and thereby does but heighten more and more the jealousy of Othello. To throw out still more clearly the angelic purity of Desdemona, Shakespeare has, in Emilia, associated with her a companion of doubtful virtue. From the sinful levity of this woman it is also conceivable

that she should not confess the abstraction of the handkerchief when Othello violently demands it back; this would otherwise be the circumstance in the whole piece the most difficult to justify. Cassio is portrayed exactly as he ought to be to excite suspicion without actual guilt, amiable and nobly disposed, but easily seduced. The public events of the first two acts show us Othello in his most glorious aspect, as the support of Venice and the terror of the Turks. They serve to withdraw the story from the mere domestic circle, just as this is done in *Romeo and Juliet* by the dissensions between the houses of Montague and Capulet. No eloquence is capable of painting the overwhelming force of the catastrophe in Othello—the presence of feelings which measure out in a moment the abysses of eternity.

If it had been within the compass of Shakespeare's scheme to have made Iago a supernatural incarnation of the principle of evil, he would not have drawn him very differently from what he is. In all essentials he is "only not quite devil." Iago bears a resemblance to the Mephistopheles of Goethe. Take away the supernatural power in Mephistopheles, and the sense of the supernatural power in Faust, and the actions of the human fiend and the real fiend are reduced to pretty much the same standard. It could not be otherwise. Goethe, to make the incarnation of the evil principle intelligible in its dealing with human affairs, could only paint what Shakespeare has painted, a being passionless, self-possessed, unsympathizing, skeptical of all truth and purity, intellectually gross and sensual, of a will uncontrolled by fear for himself or respect for others, the

abstract of the reasoning power in the highest state of activity, but without love, without veneration, without hope. Mephistopheles and Iago have this in common, also, that they each seek to destroy their victims, through their affections, and each is successful in the attempt.

Iago paints the Moor with bitter satire, as one "loving his own pride and purposes." He exhibits him lofty and magniloquent, using "a bombast circumstance;" and yet he is compelled to do justice to the Moor's high talent—

Another of his fathom they have none,
To lead their business.

The frankness and generosity of Othello, on the contrary, is a subject for his utter scorn. Here he has no sympathy with him:

The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
As asses are.

Again—

The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not—
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature.

It is his dependence upon this constant, loving, noble nature, it is upon Othello's freedom from all low suspicion, that Iago relies for his power to

Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass,
And practicing upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness.

2—Part II, Vol. XIV.

But let Othello speak for himself. Not vain, but proud; relying upon himself, his birth, his actions, he is calm at the prospect of any injury that Brabantio can do him. He is bold when he has to confront those who come as his enemies:

—I must be found;

My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me richly.

When the old senator exclaims: "Down with him—thief!" how perfect is his self-command:

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

It was his forbearance and self-restraint, bottomed upon the most enthusiastic energy, that made him a hero.

The senate scene is the triumph of Othello's perfect simplicity and fearless enthusiasm. And then his affection for Desdemona. Before the assembled senators he puts on no show of violence, and unquestionably no affectation of warmth and tenderness:

She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.

The impressibility of Desdemona is her distinguishing characteristic. With this key, the tale of Othello's wooing is a most consistent one. The timid girl is brought into immediate contact with the earnest warrior. She hears of wonders most remote from her experience; antres and deserts, rocks and hills, in themselves marvels to an inhabitant of the city of the sea.

—Of most disastrous chances;
Of moving accidents by flood and field.

Then, in four lines, comes a little domestic picture, a perfect gem in its way:

But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse.

But this impressibility, this exceeding sympathy arising out of the tenderness of her nature, is under the control of the most perfect purity. Iago does full justice to this purity, while he sees that her kindness of heart may be abused.

Othello was betrayed not only by his reliance on Iago's honesty but also by his confidence in Iago's wisdom:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings.

The wisdom which belonged to Othello's enthusiastic temperament was his confidence in the truth and purity of the being with whom his life was bound up, and his general reliance upon the better part of human nature in his judgment of his friend. When this confidence was destroyed by the craft of his deadly enemy, his sustaining power was also destroyed; the balance of his sensitive temperament was lost; his enthusiasm became wild passion; his new belief in the dominion of grossness over the apparently pure and good shaped itself into outrage; his honor lent itself to schemes of cruelty and revenge. But even amidst the whirlwind of this

passion we now and then hear something which sounds as the softest echo of love and gentleness, as where he exclaims: "But yet the pity of it, Iago! Oh, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!" It is the contemplated murder of Desdemona which thus tears his heart, and we ask, with Coleridge, "As the curtain drops, which do we pity the most?"

Hamlet.

The first edition of *Hamlet* was published in 1603, from a previous sketch composed several years earlier, the second one following in 1604, under the title of "The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect coppie." In comparing the two editions we find a remarkable improvement in the command of language, with greater philosophic depth, and a wondrous insight into what is most hidden and obscure in men's characters and motives. The action is the same, as also is the order of the dialogues and soliloquies; but the latter are much elaborated, always with an accession of dramatic force. The following will serve as an instance:

Edition of 1603.

Hamlet.—My lord, 'tis not the sable suit I wear;
 No, nor the tears that still stand in my eyes,
 Nor the distracted 'havior in the visage,
 Nor altogether mixt with outward semblance,
 Is equal to the sorrow of my heart;
 Him have I lost I must of force forego,
 These, but the ornaments and suits of woe.

HAMLET.—*Still am I called ; unhand me, gentlemen.*

HAMLET.—SHAKESPEARE.



Edition of 1604.

Hamlet.—"Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath;
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly; these, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

In this, the profoundest of plays, is a tragedy of thought inspired by continual and never-satisfied meditation on human destiny and the dark perplexity of the events of this world, one calculated to call forth the very same meditation in the minds of the spectators. This enigmatical work resembles somewhat those irrational equations in which a fraction of unknown magnitude always remains, that will in no way admit of solution. Much has been said, much written, on this piece, and yet no critic who anew expresses himself on it will entirely coincide with his predecessors. What most astonishes us is the fact that with such hidden purposes, with a foundation laid in such unfathomable depth, the whole should, at a first view, exhibit an extremely popular appearance. The dread appearance of the ghost takes possession of the mind and the imagination almost at the very commencement; then the play within the play, in which, as in a glass, we see reflected the crime whose fruitlessly attempted punishment constitutes the subject-matter of the piece; the alarm with which it fills the king; Hamlet's pretended and Ophe-

lia's real madness; her death and burial; the meeting of Hamlet and Laertes at her grave; their combat and the grand termination; lastly, the appearance of the young hero Fortinbras, who, with warlike pomp, pays the last honors to an extinct family of kings; the interspersion of comic characteristic scenes with Polonius, the courtiers and the grave-diggers, which have each of them their signification—all this fills the stage with an animated and varied movement. The only point of view from which this piece might be judged to be less theatrical than other tragedies of Shakespeare, is that in the last scenes the main action either stands still or appears to retrograde. This, however, was inevitable, and lay in the nature of the subject. The whole is intended to show that a too close consideration, which exhausts all the relations and possible consequences of a deed, must cripple the power of action; as Hamlet himself expresses it:

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

The mystery which surrounds the play centres in the character of Hamlet himself. He is of a highly cultivated mind, a prince of royal manners, endowed with the finest sense of propriety, susceptible of noble ambition, and open in the highest degree to an enthusiastic admiration of that excellence in others in which he himself is deficient. He acts the part of madness with un-

rivalled power, convincing the persons who are sent to examine into his supposed loss of reason merely by telling them unwelcome truths and rallying them with the most caustic wit. But in the resolutions which he so often embraces and always leaves unexecuted, his weakness is too apparent; he is not solely impelled by necessity to artifice and dissimulation, he has a natural inclination for crooked ways; he is a hypocrite toward himself; his far-fetched scruples are often mere pretexts to cover his want of determination—thoughts, as he says, which have

—but one part wisdom

And ever three parts coward.

He has been condemned both for his harshness in repulsing the love of Ophelia, which he himself had cherished, and for his insensibility at her death. But he is too much overwhelmed with his own sorrow to have any compassion to spare for others; besides, his outward indifference gives us by no means the measure of his internal perturbation. On the other hand, we evidently perceive in him a malicious joy, when he has succeeded in getting rid of his enemies, more through necessity and accident, which alone are able to impel him to quick and decisive measures, than by the merit of his own courage, as he himself confesses after the slaying of Polonius. Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else. From expressions of religious confidence he passes over to skeptical doubts; he believes in the ghost of his father as long as he sees it, but as soon as it has disappeared, it appears to him almost in the light of a

deception. He has even gone so far as to say "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so;" with him the poet loses himself here in labyrinths of thought, in which neither end nor beginning is discoverable. The stars themselves, from the course of events, afford no answer to the question so urgently proposed to them. A voice from another world, commissioned, it would appear, by heaven, demands vengeance for a monstrous enormity, and the demand remains without effect; the criminals are at last punished, but, as it were, by an accidental blow, and not in the solemn way requisite to convey to the world a warning example of justice; irresolution, cunning treachery and impetuous rage hurry on to a common destruction; the less guilty and the innocent are equally involved in the general ruin. The destiny of humanity is here exhibited as a gigantic Sphinx, which threatens to precipitate into the abyss of skepticism all who are unable to solve her dread enigmas.

As one example of the many niceties of Shakespeare which have been generally misunderstood, may be mentioned the style in which the player's speech about Hecuba is conceived. It has been the subject of much controversy among commentators whether this was taken by Shakespeare from himself or from another, and whether, in the praise of the piece of which it is supposed to be a part, Hamlet was speaking seriously, or merely meant to ridicule the tragical bombast of his contemporaries. It seems never to have occurred to them that this speech must not be judged by itself, but in connection with the place where it is introduced. To

distinguish it in the play itself as dramatic poetry, it was necessary that it should rise above the dignified poetry of the former in the same proportion that theatrical elevation always soars above simple nature. Hence Shakespeare has composed the play in Hamlet altogether in sententious rhymes full of antitheses. But this solemn and measured tone did not suit a speech in which violent emotion ought to prevail, and the poet had no other expedient than the one of which he made choice—overcharging the pathos. Unquestionably the language of the speech in question is falsely emphatical; but this fault is so mixed up with true grandeur that a player practiced in artificially calling forth in himself the emotion he is imitating may certainly be carried away by it. Besides, it will hardly be believed that Shakespeare knew so little of his art as not to be aware that a tragedy in which there is a lengthy epic relation of a transaction that happened so long before as the destruction of Troy, could neither be dramatic nor theatrical.

There is something altogether indefinable and mysterious in the poet's delineation of this character—something wild and irregular in the circumstances with which the character is associated. We see that Hamlet is propelled rather than propelling. But why is this turn given to the delineation? We cannot exactly tell. Doubtless much of the very charm of the play is its mysteriousness. It awakes not only thoughts of the grand and the beautiful, but of the incomprehensible. Its obscurity constitutes a portion of its sublimity. This is the stage in which most minds are content to rest, and

perhaps better so, with regard to the comprehension of *Hamlet*.

The final appreciation of the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare belongs to the development of the critical faculty. Goethe, Coleridge, Schlegel, Lamb, Hazlitt, Mrs. Jameson and other writers out of number, some of the very highest order of excellence, have brought to the criticism and explanation of this play a most valuable fund of judgment, taste and æsthetical knowledge. To condense what is most deserving of remembrance in these admirable productions within due limits would be impossible. We must, therefore, place ourselves in the condition of one who has, however imperfectly, worked out in his own mind a comprehension of the idea of Shakespeare.

The opening of *Hamlet* is one of the most absorbing scenes in the Shakespearean drama. It produces its effect by the supernatural being brought into the most immediate contact with the real. The sentinels are prepared for the appearance of the ghost, Horatio being incredulous, but they are all surrounded with an atmosphere of common life. "Long live the king," "Tis bitter cold," "Not a mouse stirring," and the familiar pleantry of Horatio, exhibit to us minds under the ordinary state of human feeling. At the moment when the recollections of Bernardo arise into that imaginative power which belongs to the tale he is about to tell, the ghost appears. All that was doubtful in the narrative of the supernatural vision—what left upon Horatio's mind the impression only of a "thing"—because as real as the silence, the cold

and the midnight. The vision is then "most like the king"—

Such was the very armor he had on.

The ghost remains but an instant, and we are again among the realities of common life. When it reappears there is still a tinge of skepticism in the soldiers:

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

But their incredulity is at once subdued, and a resolution is taken by Horatio upon the conviction that what he once held as a "fantasy" is a dreadful being, of whose existence there can be no doubt.

Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet: for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

We have here, by anticipation, all the deep and inexplicable consequences of this vision laid upon young Hamlet; it is his destiny.

Here we need not stop to analyze the scenes and acts that follow, for of all Shakespeare's plays this is the most familiar, and it is also one on which most men have already formed their own opinion. It will be sufficient to dwell very briefly on a few of its most striking features, and first as to the question of Hamlet's madness. Before the appearance of the ghost his spirit has been wounded by a sudden blow—a father dead, a crown snatched from him, a mother disgracefully married. Thus he looks with a jaundiced eye on "all the

uses of this world," on the "unweeded garden" that he fain would leave to be possessed by "things rank and gross in nature." Yet he communes with himself in a tone which bespeaks the habitual refinement of his thoughts, and his words shape themselves into images that belong to a high and cultivated intellect. Then comes the dread vision, with its appalling revelation, which lays on him a responsibility greater than his nature can bear. The mental disturbance which it causes becomes apparent while he thinks aloud, almost as soon as the ghost has disappeared; but he is not mad either in the popular or in the physiological sense; it is merely the mental derangement of a noble, but not an heroic, nature, sinking beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away. Coleridge attributes what he considers Hamlet's assumed eccentricity, after the ghost scene, to "the disposition to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild transition to the ludicrous, a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on delirium." It is under the immediate influence of the disorder in his soul that he resolves to feign madness. With a mind horribly disturbed with thoughts beyond mortal reach he still believes that the habitual powers of his intellect can control this disturbance and even render it an instrument of his safety. It has been observed that if there be anything disproportioned in his mind, it seems to be this only—that intellect is in excess; it is too subtle; it is even ungovernable. It is in his own high and overwrought consciousness of intellect that he describes the perfect man, "in apprehension how like a god." Much

that requires elucidation in the play can be explained by this exceptional predominance of the intellectual faculty, and to this, perhaps, belongs the idea of pretending insanity as a cloak for his real designs.

Here begins the complexity of Hamlet's character, and in his new guise he is thus presented to us by Ophelia, then for the first time showing the preoccupation, which afterward appears in many of his sayings:

He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being. That done, he lets me go;
And, with his head over his shoulder turned,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

In this was none of the "antic disposition" which Hamlet thought fit to put on; still less was it, as Polonius deemed, the "ecstasy of love" produced by Ophelia's coldness. It was the utterance, so far as it could be uttered, of his sense of the hard necessity that was upon him to go forth to a mortal struggle with evil powers and influences; to tear himself from all the soothing and delicious fancies that would arise out of his growing affection for the simple maid whom he treated so roughly. Under the pressure of his vow that the ghost's

injunction should "live within the volume of his brain, unmix'd with baser matter," all else in the world has become to him mean and unimportant. Love was now to him "a trivial fond record," and philosophy "the saws of books."

That the king and his courtiers considered Hamlet insane, and freely talked of his insanity, is of no significance, for this was merely the "antic disposition," and the sarcasm directed against them, in which he appeared to be merely wandering, was but to relieve the bitterness of his soul. They did not see through his disguise any more than did Polonius, who, while pronouncing him "far gone," yet could not help noticing "how pregnant his replies are." In truth, the old man was himself verging on imbecility, though he had not wit enough to become entirely crazy—a condition which presupposes the possession of brains.

In the scene with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Hamlet is natural enough; for with them, as his old school-fellows, he is perfectly at ease, and he is again the Hamlet they knew of old—the gentleman and the scholar. He even discloses to them a glimpse of the deep melancholy which weighs on his soul: "O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams." He knows that his friends were sent to him as spies; but he suppresses his feelings, and bursts out into the majestic piece of rhetoric beginning, "What a piece of work is man!"—one that could only have been conceived by a being of the highest intellectual power, in the full possession of his faculties. In the scene with

the players, also, Hamlet is entirely himself. He has escaped for a moment from the one o'ermastering thought, but even here that thought follows him: "Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?" Then comes the soliloquy, "Now I am alone," in which, as Charles Lamb expresses it, "the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting are reduced to words for the sake of the reader." Hamlet's indecision is not due to want of courage, as appears in several instances—

My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

But his will is subject to his higher faculties, and he sees no course clear enough to satisfy his understanding. He would have been greater had he been less great.

In his great soliloquy, "To be or not to be," he is interrupted by Ophelia in the midst of a most solemn train of thought. When she says to him—

My lord, I have remembrances of yours.

it is probable that his rude denial of having given Ophelia remembrances, and his "Ha, ha! are you honest?" with all the bitter words that follow, are meant to indicate the disturbance which is produced in his mind by the clashing of his love for her with the predominant thought which now makes all that belongs to his personal happiness worthless. His bitterness escapes in generalizations; it is not against Ophelia, but against her sex, that he exclaims. To that gentle

creature, the harshest thing he says is: "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." Coleridge thinks that the harshness in Hamlet's manner is produced by his perceiving that Ophelia was acting a part toward him and that they were watched. Perhaps, as Lamb expresses it, these "tokens of an unhinged mind" are mixed "with a certain artifice, to alienate Ophelia by affected discourtesies, so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that intercourse which can no longer find a place amid business so serious as that which he has to do." At any rate, the gentle and tender Ophelia is not outraged. Her pity only is excited; and, if the apparent rudeness of Hamlet requires a proper appreciation of his character to reconcile it with our admiration of him, Shakespeare has at this moment most adroitly presented to us that description of him which Goethe anticipated:

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
The expectancy and rose of the fair state.

Hamlet recovers a temporary tranquillity. He has something to do, and that something is connected with his great business. He has to prepare the players to speak his speech. Those who look upon the surface only may think these directions out of place; but nothing can really be more appropriate than that such rules of art, so just, so universal and so complete should be put by Shakespeare into the mouth of him who had preëminently "the scholar's tongue." The satisfaction he takes in the device, the hopes which he has that his

doubts may be resolved lend a real elevation to his spirits, which may pass for his feigned madness. He utters whatever comes uppermost; and the freedoms which he takes with Ophelia, while they are equally remote from bitterness or harshness, are such as in Shakespeare's age would not offend pure ears.

The test is applied; the king is "frighted with false fire," and the elation of Hamlet's mind is at its height. Then comes the climax—"Now could I drink hot blood." Yet he is not raving, and in the scene with the queen he vindicates his own sanity:

It is not madness

That I have uttered: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from.

The question may be asked, why is it, when we think upon the fate of the poor stricken Ophelia, that we never reproach Hamlet? We are certain that it was no "trifling of his favor" that broke her heart; we are assured that his seeming harshness did not sink deep into her spirit; we believe that he loved her more than "forty thousand brothers;" and yet she certainly perished through Hamlet and his actions. But we blame him not, for her destiny was involved in his. Says a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*: "Soon as we connect her destiny with Hamlet we know that darkness is to overshadow her, and that sadness and sorrow will step in between her and the ghost-haunted avenger of his father's murder. Soon as our pity is excited for her it continues gradually to deepen, and, when she ap-

pears in her madness, we are as deeply moved as when we hear of her death. Perhaps the description of that catastrophe by the queen is poetical rather than dramatic; but its exquisite beauty prevails, and Ophelia, dying and dead, is still the same Ophelia that first won our love. Perhaps the very forgetfulness of her, throughout the remainder of the play, leaves the soul at full liberty to dream of the departed. She has passed away from the earth like a beautiful dream."

Garrick omitted the grave-diggers. He had the terror of Voltaire before his eyes. The English audiences compelled their restoration, for there was something in the scene that brought Hamlet home to the humblest in the large reach of his universal philosophy. The conversation of the clowns before he comes upon the scene is, indeed, pleasantry mixed with sarcasm; but, the moment that Hamlet opens his lips, the meditative richness of his mind is poured out upon us, and he grapples with the most familiar and yet the deepest thoughts of human nature, in a style that is sublime from its simplicity. The catastrophe is in perfect accord with the ultimate prostration of his mind. It is the result of an accident produced we know not how. The general massacre on which the curtain falls has been the subject of much adverse comment; but Shakespeare does nothing without excellent reasons.

Macbeth.

If *Hamlet* is the grandest of Shakespeare's plays, *Macbeth* is from a tragic standpoint the most sublime

and the most impressive as an acting play. Nothing so terrible has been written since the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, and nothing in dramatic literature—not even the slaying of Agamemnon—is depicted with such awesome intensity as the murder of Duncan. The witches are not, it is true, the divine Eumenides; they are not intended to be so; they are ignoble and vulgar instruments of hell, and the German poet who transformed them into a mixture of fates, furies and enchantresses, clothing them with tragic dignity, very ill understood their meaning.

Whether the age of Shakespeare still believed in ghosts and witches is a matter of perfect indifference for the justification of the use which, in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, he has made of preëxisting traditions. No superstition can be widely diffused without having a foundation in human nature; on this the poet builds; he calls up from their hidden abysses that dread of the unknown, that presage of a dark side of nature and a world of spirits, which philosophy now imagines it has altogether exploded.

These repulsive hags, from which the imagination shrinks, are here emblems of the hostile powers which operate in nature; and the repugnance of our senses is outweighed by the mental horror. With one another they discourse like women of the very lowest class; for this was the class to which they were ordinarily supposed to belong; when, however, they address Macbeth, they assume a loftier tone; their predictions, which they either themselves pronounce or allow their apparitions to deliver, have all the obscure brevity, the majestic

solemnity of oracles. They are governed by an invisible spirit, or the operation of such great and dreadful events would be above their sphere. With what intent did Shakespeare assign the same place to them in his play which they occupy in the history of Macbeth as related in the old chronicles? A monstrous crime is committed; Duncan, a venerable old man, and the best of kings, is, in defenseless sleep, under the hospital's roof, murdered by his subject, whom he has loaded with honors and rewards. Natural motives alone seem inadequate, or the perpetrator must have been portrayed as a hardened villain. Shakespeare wished to exhibit a more sublime picture—an ambitious but noble hero, yielding to a deep-laid hellish temptation, and in whom all the crimes to which, in order to secure the fruits of his first crime, he is impelled by necessity, cannot altogether eradicate the stamp of native heroism. He has, therefore, given a threefold division to the guilt of that crime. The first idea comes from beings whose whole activity is guided by a lust of wickedness. The weird sisters surprise Macbeth in the moment of the intoxication of victory, when his love of glory has been gratified; they cheat his eyes by exhibiting to him as the work of fate what in reality can only be accomplished by his own deed, and gain credence for all their words by the immediate fulfilment of the first prediction.

The opportunity of murdering the king immediately offers; the wife of Macbeth conjures him not to let it slip; she urges him on with a fiery eloquence, which has at command all those sophisms that serve to throw a false splendor over crime. Little more than the mere

execution falls to the share of Macbeth; he is driven into it, as it were, in a tumult of fascination. Repentance immediately follows, nay, even precedes the deed, and the stings of conscience leave him rest neither night nor day. But he is now fairly entangled in the snares of hell. That same Macbeth, who once as a warrior could spurn at death, now that he dreads the prospect of the life to come, clings with growing anxiety to his earthly existence the more miserable it becomes, and pitilessly removes out of the way whatever to his dark and suspicious mind seems to threaten danger. However much we may abhor his actions, we cannot altogether refuse to compassionate the state of his mind; we lament the ruin of so many noble qualities, and even in his last defense we are compelled to admire the struggle of a brave will with a cowardly conscience.

Lady Macbeth, who of all the human participators in the king's murder is the most guilty, is thrown by the terrors of her conscience into a state of incurable bodily and mental disease; she dies, unlamented even by her husband. Macbeth is still found worthy to die the death of a hero on the field of battle. The noble Macduff is allowed the satisfaction of saving his country by punishing with his own hand the tyrant who had murdered his wife and children. Banquo, by an early death, atones for his ambitious curiosity to know his glorious descendants, as he thereby has roused Macbeth's jealousy; but he preserves his mind pure from the evil suggestions of the witches; his name is blessed in his race, destined to enjoy for a long succession of ages that royal dignity which Macbeth could only hold for his own life.

In the progress of the action, this play is the reverse of *Hamlet*; it strides forward with amazing rapidity from the first catastrophe to the last. The precise duration of the action cannot be ascertained—years, perhaps, according to the story—but to the imagination the most crowded time appears always the shortest. Here we can hardly conceive how so much could have been compressed into so narrow a space, and not merely external events, for the very inmost recesses in the minds of the dramatic personages are laid open to us. It is as if the drags were taken from the wheels of time, and they rolled along without interruption in their descent.

The play is also of historic interest, its incidents dating back to the days of Edward the Confessor. There were sufficient materials for the drama in Holinshed's *History of Scotland*; but with these Shakespeare has blended another story—that of the murder of King Duff by Donwald and his wife in Donwald's castle. "The king got him into his privy chamber, only with two of his chamberlains, who, having brought him to bed, came forth again, and then fell to banqueting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared divers delicate dishes and sundry sorts of drinks for their supper, whereat they sat up so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges, that their heads no sooner got to the pillow but asleep they were so fast that a man might have removed the chamber over them sooner than to have awaked them out of their drunken sleep.

"Then Donwald, though he abhorred the act greatly in heart, yet through instigation of his wife he called four of his servants unto him, whom he had made privy

to his wicked intent before, and framed to his purpose with large gifts, and now declaring unto them after what sort they should work the feat, they gladly obeyed his instructions, and speedily going about the murder, they enter the chamber in which the king lay a little before cock's crow, where they secretly cut his throat as he lay sleeping, without any bustling at all; and immediately by a postern gate they carried forth the dead body into the fields."

King Lear.

As in *Macbeth* terror reaches its utmost height, in *King Lear* the sense of compassion is exhausted. The principal characters here are not these who act, but those who suffer. We have not in this, as in most tragedies, the picture of a calamity in which the sudden blows of fate seem still to honor the head which they strike, and where the loss is always accompanied by some flattering consolation in the memory of the former possession; but a fall from the highest elevation into the deepest abyss of misery, where humanity is stripped of all external and internal advantages, and given up a prey to naked helplessness. The threefold dignity of a king, an old man, and a father, is dishonored by the cruel ingratitude of his unnatural daughters; the old king, who out of a foolish tenderness has given away everything, is driven out into the world a homeless beggar; the childish imbecility to which he was fast advancing changes into the wildest insanity, and when he is rescued from the destitution to which he was abandoned, it is too late. The kind consolations of

filial care and attention and of true friendship are now lost on him; his bodily and mental powers are destroyed beyond hope of recovery, and all that now remains to him of life is the capability of loving and suffering beyond measure. What a picture we have in the meeting of Lear and Edgar in a tempestuous night and in a wretched hovel! The youthful Edgar has, by the wicked arts of his brother, and through his father's blindness, fallen, as did Lear, from the rank to which his birth entitled him; and, as the only means of escaping further persecution, is reduced to the disguise of a beggar tormented by evil spirits. The king's fool, notwithstanding the voluntary degradation which is implied in his condition, is, after Kent, Lear's most faithful associate, the wisest counsellor. This good-hearted fool clothes reason with the livery of his motley garb; the high-born beggar acts the part of insanity; and both, were they even in reality what they seem, would still be enviable in comparison with the king, who feels that the violence of his grief threatens to overpower his reason. The meeting of Edgar with the blinded Gloucester is equally pathetic; nothing can be more affecting than to see the ejected son become the father's guide, and the good angel, who, under the disguise of insanity, saves him by an ingenious and pious fraud from the horror and despair of self-murder.

The story of Lear and his daughters was left by Shakespeare as he found it in a fabulous tradition, with all the features characteristic of the simplicity of old times. But in that tradition there is not the slightest trace of the story of Gloucester and his sons, which was

derived by Shakespeare from another source. The incorporation of the two stories has been censured as destructive of the unity of action. But whatever contributes to the intrigue of the *dénouement* must always possess unity. And with what ingenuity and skill are the two main parts of the composition dovetailed into one another! The pity felt by Gloster for the fate of Lear becomes the means whereby his son Edmund effects his complete destruction, and affords the out-cast Edgar an opportunity of being the savior of his father. On the other hand, Edmund is active in the cause of Regan and Goneril, and the criminal passion which they both entertain for him induces them to execute justice on each other and on themselves. The laws of the drama have therefore been sufficiently complied with, and it is the very combination which constitutes the beauty of the work.

The two cases resemble each other in the main; an infatuated father is blind toward his well-disposed child, and the unnatural children, whom he prefers, requite him by the ruin of his happiness. But all the circumstances are so different that the stories, while they each make a correspondent impression on the heart, form a complete contrast for the imagination. Were Lear alone to suffer from his daughters, the impression would be limited to the powerful compassion felt by us for his private misfortune. But two such unheard-of examples taking place at the same time have the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world; the picture becomes gigantic and fills us with such alarm as we should entertain at the idea that the heavenly

bodies might one day fall from their orbits. To save in some degree the honor of human nature, Shakespeare never wishes his spectators to forget that the story takes place in a dreary and barbarous age; he lays particular stress on the circumstance that the Britons of that day were still heathens, although he has not made all the remaining circumstances to coincide learnedly with the time which he has chosen.

From this point of view we must judge of many coarsenesses in expression and manners; for instance, the immodest manner in which Gloster acknowledged his bastard, Kent's quarrel with the steward, and more especially the cruelty personally inflicted on Gloster by the duke of Cornwall. Even the virtue of the honest Kent bears the stamp of an iron age, in which the good and the bad display the same uncontrollable energy. Great qualities have not been superfluously assigned to the king; the poet could command our sympathy for his situation, without concealing what he had done to bring himself into it. Lear is choleric, overbearing and almost childish from age, when he drives out his youngest daughter because she will not join in the hypocritical exaggerations of her sisters. But he has a warm and affectionate heart, which is susceptible of the most fervent gratitude; and even rays of a high and kingly disposition burst forth from the eclipse of his understanding. Cordelia, with her heavenly beauty of soul, reminds us of Antigone. In the entire play little more than a hundred lines are assigned to her; yet, throughout the five acts, we can never forget her, and at the close she lingers in our recollection as if we had seen

some being more beautiful and purer than a thing of earth.

After surviving so many sufferings, Lear can only die, and what more truly tragic end for him than to die from grief for the death of Cordelia? According to Shakespeare's plan, the guilty, it is true, are all punished, for wickedness destroys itself; but the virtues that would bring help and succor are either too late or are overmatched by the cunning activity of malice.

The legend of Lear had unquestionably been dramatized before Shakespeare produced his tragedy "The true Chronicle History of King Leir and his three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan and Cordelia, as it hath been divers and sundry times lately acted," was printed, probably for the first time, in 1605; but there can be no doubt that it belongs to a period some ten or perhaps twenty years earlier. In 1594 an entry was made at Stationers' hall, of "The moste famous Chronicle Hystorie of Leire King of England, and his Three Daughters." Shakespeare's story of Lear is taken from Holinshead's account of the legend, one dated back to the time when Joas reigned over Judah, or, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth's, to the days of Isaiah and Hosea. A garbled version of the play as written by the poet was prepared by one Nahum Tate, who, not understanding the art of Shakespeare and having no dramatic art himself, thought to adopt the original to the popular taste. For over a century this abortion held possession of the stage, until Macready restored to us the work of the great master, since cleansed from its remaining impurities by able commentators.

In tragical pathos, in dramatic force, in grandeur of sentiment and diction, *Lear* has no superior in all the wide range of the world's drama. The language often rises to or exceeds, if possible, the sublimity of *Æschylus*, and the tragedy has the further advantage of dealing with human beings, human passions, and human frailties, and not with the affairs of gods and demi-gods. The modern play-goer does not greatly concern himself with the deeds and thoughts of the powers supernal, and if he can see human beings set forth on the stage, with their virtues and infirmities, would willingly leave the gods to manage their own affairs.

II.

Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors.

The national temperament and limited culture of the English people in the Elizabethan era afforded little inducement for dramatists to copy either classic models or the light productions of the Italian and French schools. In the pastoral drama and the court mask, however, a number of them found welcome opportunities for exercising their lyrical gifts and inventive powers. Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Daniel and others sought to rival Tasso and Guarini, the first-named coming nearest to nationalizing a foreign growth by the fresh simplicity of his treatment.

The Mask.

The mask was an elastic species of composition, mixing in varying proportion its constituent elements of declamation and dialogue, music and dancing, decoration and scenery. In its least elaborate literary form, which externally was the most elaborate, it closely approached the pageant; in other instances the distinctness of its characters or the fullness of the action intro-

duced into its schemes brought it nearer to the regular drama. A frequent ornament of Queen Elizabeth's progresses, it was further cultivated in the reign of James I, and in that of his successor outshone, by the favor it enjoyed with court and nobility, the attractions of the regular drama itself. Most of the later Elizabethan dramatists contributed to this species, while Shakespeare only incidentally in the course of his plays expended on it the resources of his fancy. By far the most successful writer of masks was Ben Jonson, of whose numerous compositions of this kind many hold a permanent place in poetic literature.

The *Microcosmus* of Nabbes, printed in 1637, which closely resembles a Morality play, seems to have been the first mask brought upon the public stage. It was the performance of a mask by Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies at Whitehall which some years previously had been thought to have supplied to the invective of *Histrion Mastix* against the stage the occasion for disloyal innuendo; and it was for the performance of a mask in a great nobleman's castle that Milton later composed one of the loftiest and most beautiful of poems. *Comus* has been condemned as a drama; but dramatic qualities are not essential to the species. The mask ultimately merged into the opera, or continued a humble life of its own as a pastime.

Dramatists After Shakespeare.

Among Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors there is but one who, by force of genius not less than

by the circumstances of his literary career, stands in a position of undisputed primacy among his fellows, and that was Ben Jonson. To him in his latter days a whole generation of younger writers did homage as to their veteran chief, and thus he alone can be termed the founder of a school or family of dramatists. Yet his preëminence did not extend to both branches of the drama. In tragedy he fell short of the highest standard; for the weight of his learning lay too heavily upon him. Such as they are, however, his tragic works stand almost, though not quite, alone in this period as examples of sustained effort in historic tragedy proper. Chapman treated stirring themes, more especially from modern French history, always with vigor and at times with genuine effectiveness; but though rich in beauties of detail he failed in the supreme art of developing a character by means of the action. Others, including Ford, Dekker and Heywood, attempted to write tragedies and chronicle histories on the grand plane, but fell short of their aim.

Tragedy.

The tragedies and comedies of this era show an astonishing exuberance, and in mere externals of theme range from Byzantium to ancient Britain and from the Cæsars to the tyrants of the Renaissance. The sources from which subjects were derived had been constantly on the increase. Besides Italian, Spanish and French fiction, original or translated, besides British legend in its Romance dress, and English fiction in its humbler or in its more ambitious and artificial forms,

the contemporary foreign drama, especially the Spanish, offered abundant opportunities. To the English, as to the French and Italian drama of both this and the following century, the prolific dramatists clustered round Lopé de Vega and Calderon supplied a whole arsenal of plots, incidents and situations—among others to Middleton, to Webster and especially to Beaumont and Fletcher. And in addition to these materials, a new field of resources was at hand, since the dramatist had begun to regard events and episodes of English domestic life as fit subjects for tragic treatment. Domestic tragedy of this description was indeed no novelty on the French stage; Shakespeare himself may have touched, with his master-hand more than one effort of this kind; but Heywood must be regarded as the first who achieved anything remarkable in this class, to which some of the plays of Dekker, Middleton and others more or less belong.

Yet, in contrast with this wide variety of sources and apparent variety of themes, the number of motives employed in the tragic drama of this period was comparatively small and limited. Notwithstanding the diversity of subjects among such writers as Marston, Webster, Fletcher, Ford and Shirley, an impression of sameness is left upon us by a connected perusal of their works. Political ambition, conjugal jealousy, absolute female devotion, unbridled masculine passion—such are the motives which constantly recur in the later Elizabethan drama. And this impression is heightened by the want of moderation, by the excess of passion, which these dramatists so habitually ex-

hibit in the treatment of their favorite themes. All the tragic poets of this period are not equally amenable to this charge; in Webster, master as he is of the effects of the horrible, and in Ford, seductive in his sweetness, the monotony of exaggerated passion is broken by those marvellous sudden and subtle touches through which their tragic genius creates its most thrilling effects. Nor will the tendency to excess of passion which Beaumont and Fletcher undoubtedly exhibit be confounded with their distinctive power of sustaining tenderly pathetic characters and situations in a degree unequalled by any of their contemporaries—a power seconded by a beauty of diction and softness of versification which for a time raised them to the highest pinnacle of popularity, and which entitles them to their enduring preëminence. In their morals Beaumont and Fletcher are not above the level of their age. The manliness of sentiment which ennobles the rhetorical genius of Massinger, and the gift of poetic illustration which entitles Shirley to be remembered as something besides the latest and most fertile of this group of dramatists, have less direct bearing upon the general character of the tragic art of the period.

Comedy.

In comedy, on the other hand, the genius and insight of Jonson pointed the way to a steady and legitimate advance. His theory of “Humours,” which found the most palpable expression in two of his earliest plays, shows the paramount importance in the comic drama of

the creation of distinctive human types. In the actual creation of these it was impossible that Jonson should excel Shakespeare; but in the consciousness with which he recognized and indicated the highest sphere of a comic dramatist's labors, he rendered to the drama a direct service which Shakespeare had left unperformed. By the rest of his contemporaries and his successors, some of whom were content avowedly to follow in his footsteps, Jonson was only occasionally rivalled in individual instances of comic creations; in the entirety of its achievements his genius as a comic dramatist remained unapproached. The favorite types of Jonsonian comedy, to which Dekker, Marston and Chapman had, though to no large extent, added others of their own, were elaborated with incessant zeal and remarkable effect by their contemporaries and successors. It was after a very different fashion from that in which the Roman comedians reiterated the ordinary types of the New Attic comedy, that the inexhaustible verve of Middleton, the buoyant productivity of Fletcher, the observant humor of Field and the artistic versatility of Shirley mirrored in innumerable pictures of contemporary life the undying follies and foibles of mankind. In the comedy of manners more than one of these surpassed the old master, especially in a lightness which did not impair their sureness of touch, while in the construction of plots the access of abundant new materials, and the greater elasticity in treatment which is the result of accumulated experience, enabled them to maintain a steady progress. Thus the comic drama of England, from Jonson to Shirley, is unsurpassed as a comedy of

manners, while as a comedy of character it at least defies comparison with any other national growth preceding or coëval with it. Though the younger generation was unequal in originality or force to its predecessors, yet so little exhausted was the vitality of the species that its traditions survived the interregnum of the Revolution and connected themselves in some measure with later growths of English comedy.

Ben Jonson found in Shakespeare a ready encourager of his talents. His first piece, imperfect in many respects, *Every Man in His Humor*, was by Shakespeare's intervention brought out on the stage; *Sejanus* was even retouched by him, and in both he undertook a principal character. This hospitable treatment on the part of so great a man met with an ungrateful return. Jonson assumed a superiority over Shakespeare on account of his school learning, the only point in which he really had an advantage; he made sarcastic allusions in his prologues and plays to many exquisite flights of poetic fancy, as contrary to true taste. Jonson was lacking in this soul quality, though his literary merits are high and various.

Sejanus and Catiline.

For one who incessantly preached the imitation of the ancients Jonson's tragedies utterly fall short of the Greek standard. In the historical elaboration given to these plays unity of time and place were entirely out of the question, and both are crowded with a multitude of secondary persons, such as are never to be found in

the classic drama. In *Catiline* he follows in the main the story of the conspiracy as related by Sallust. It was probably due in part to his enormous wealth that the latter was accepted as the authority on this famous episode. Among the numerous buildings recently discovered in the spacious grounds known as the gardens of Sallust is his former palace, its third floor level with the top of the Quirinal hill, near the line of the Servian wall.

Jonson's Comedies.

Jonson soon discovered that his talents were far better suited to comedy, and especially to the comedy of character. His characterization, however, is more marked with serious satire than playful ridicule; the later Roman satirists, rather than the comic authors, were his models. Nature had denied him that light and easy raillery which plays harmlessly round everything and which seems to be the mere effusion of gayety, but which is so much the more philosophic, as it is not the vehicle of any definite doctrine. He set himself to exhibit real life with a minute accuracy. There is more of a spirit of observation than of fancy in the comic inventions of Jonson. Captain Bobadil, in *Every Man in His Humor*, a beggarly and cowardly adventurer, who passes himself off with young and simple people for a Hector, notwithstanding the change of manners, still remains a model in his way, and he has been imitated by English writers of comedy in after times. He has seldom planned his scenes so successfully as

in this piece, where the jealous merchant is called off on important business, when his wife is in expectation of a visit of which he is suspicious, and when he is anxious to station his servant as a sentinel without, however, confiding his secret to him, because, above all things, he dreads the discovery of his own jealousy. This scene is a masterpiece, and if Jonson had always done as well, he would have ranked among the first of comic writers. Shakespeare is said to have played the part of Old Knowell. In so far as plot is concerned, the greatest praise is merited by *Volpone*, *The Alchemist* and *Epicæne, or the Silent Woman*. In *Volpone* Jonson for once has entered into Italian manners, without, however, taking an ideal view of them.

His powers as a dramatist were at their height during the earlier half of the reign of James I, and by the year 1616 he had produced nearly all the plays which are worthy of his genius. In that year a modest pension of a hundred marks a year was conferred upon him, and possibly this token of royal favor may have encouraged him to the publication of the first volume of the folio collected edition of his works. Jonson had other patrons more bountiful than the crown, and in 1613 had travelled to France as governor, or tutor, to the eldest son of Sir Walter Raleigh, then a state prisoner in the Tower. He continued to produce masks and entertainments when called upon; but he was attracted by other literary pursuits, and had already accomplished enough to furnish plentiful materials for retrospective discourse over pipe or cup. He was entitled to lord it at the Mermaid, where his quick antagonist in earlier wit combats no

longer appeared, even on a visit from his comfortable retreat at Stratford. On the other hand, Ben carried his town habits into Warwickshire, where it is said that he and Drayton made Shakespeare drink so hard with them as to cause the fever of which the latter died. The story is doubted, although it rests on the authority of the parish parson. We may picture Jonson as presiding at the Mermaid, where he ruled the roost among the younger authors, whose pride it was to be "sealed of the tribe of Ben," and by the avowal of grave writers, old or young, not one of them would have ventured to dispute his preëminence in the national literature. Nor was he to the last unconscious of the claims upon him which his position brought with it. When death came upon him, on August 6, 1637, he left behind him an unfinished work of great beauty, the pastoral drama of *The Sad Shepherd*. For forty years, he said in the prologue, "he had feasted the public; at first he could scarce hit its taste, but patience had at last enabled it to identify itself with the working of his pen."

Beaumont and Fletcher.

Richard, father of the dramatist, John Fletcher, was bishop of Bristol, Worcester, and later of London. John was born in 1579. Francis Beaumont was son of Sir Francis, judge of the Common Pleas Court. At twenty-two Beaumont prefixed to the masterpiece of Ben Jonson some noticeable verses in honor of his "dear friend" the author, and in the same year—1607—appeared the anonymous comedy of *The Woman-*

Hater, usually assigned to Fletcher alone. As the latter also prefixed to the edition of *Volpone* a copy of commendatory verses, we may presume that their common admiration for a common friend was among the earliest and strongest influences which drew together the two great poets whose names were thenceforward to be forever indivisible. Whatever may have been their respective situations when, either by happy chance or, as Dyce suggests, by the good offices of Jonson, they were first brought together, their intimacy soon became so much closer than that of ordinary brothers that the household which they shared as bachelors was conducted on thoroughly communistic principles. Soon after this union the twin stars of the stage rose visibly together for the first time. *Philaster*, the most beautiful, though not the loftiest of tragic plays that we owe to the comrades or the successors of Shakespeare, has always been regarded as the first-born issue of their common genius.

Thierry and Theodoret.

This tragedy has generally been dated earlier and assigned to Fletcher alone; but we can be sure neither of the early date nor of the single authorship. The main body of the play, comprising both the great scenes which throw out into full and final relief the character of either heroine for good or evil, bears throughout the unmistakable image and superscription of Fletcher; yet there are parts which for gravity and steady strength of style, for reserve and temperance of effect, would seem

to suggest the collaboration of a calmer and more patient hand; and these suggest rather the touch of Massinger than of Beaumont. Hardly eight years of toil and triumph, of joys and glorious life were spared by destiny to the younger poet between the date assigned to the first revelation of his genius in *Philaster* and that which marks the end of all his labors. On the 6th of March, 1616, Francis Beaumont died, according to Jonson and tradition, ere he was thirty years of age, and if we may trust the evidence of friends, he died of his own genius and fiery overwork of brain. The spring of 1616, we may note in passing, was the darkest that ever dawned upon the literary world; for, just forty-eight days afterward, it witnessed, on the 23d of April, the removal from earth of the mightiest genius that ever portrayed humanity. Thus less than seven weeks divided the death-days of Beaumont and Shakespeare. Some three years earlier, by Dyce's estimate, when about the age of twenty-eight, Beaumont had married Ursula, co-heiress to Henry Isley of Sundridge in Kent, by whom he left two daughters, one of them posthumous. Fletcher survived his friend nine years and five months; he died in the great plague of 1625, and was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, not, as we might have wished, beside his younger fellow in fame.

The plays collected under both names amount to upward of fifty, and of this number it is probable that the half must be considered as the work of Fletcher alone. Beaumont and Fletcher's works did not make their appearance until a short time after the death of the latter; the publishers have not given themselves the trouble to

distinguish critically the share which belonged to each, and still less do they afford us any information respecting the diversity of their talents. Some of their contemporaries have attributed boldness of imagination to Fletcher, and a mature judgment to his friend; the former, according to their opinion, was the inventive genius; the latter, the directing and moderating critic; but, as we shall see, Beaumont was something far more than this. It is now impossible to distinguish with certainty the writings of each, nor would the knowledge repay the labor. From some allusions in the way of parody, we may conclude that they entertained no very extravagant admiration of their great predecessor; from whom, nevertheless, they both learned much, and unquestionably borrowed many of their thoughts. In the whole form of their plays they followed his example, regardless of the different principles of Ben Jonson and of the imitations of the ancients. Like Shakespeare, they drew from novels and romances; they combined pathetic and burlesque scenes in the same play, and, by the concatenation of incidents, endeavored to excite the impression of the extraordinary and the wonderful. Their first object was effect, which the great artist can hardly fail of attaining, if he is determined above all things to satisfy himself. They were not players, like most of their predecessors, but they lived in the neighborhood of the theatre, were in constant intercourse with it, and possessed a perfect understanding of theatrical matters. They were also thoroughly acquainted with the people for whom they wrote; but they found it more convenient to lower themselves to

the tastes of the public than to follow the example of Shakespeare, who elevated the public to his own level. They lived in a vigorous age, which more readily pardoned extravagances of every description than feebleness and frigidity. They therefore never allowed themselves to be constrained by moral considerations. They are least successful in their tragic attempts, because their feeling is not sufficiently drawn from the depths of human nature, and because they bestowed too little attention on the general consideration of human destinies; they succeed much better in comedy, and in those serious and pathetic pictures which occupy a middle place betwixt comedy and tragedy.

Immorality.

The morality of these writers will not bear any close scrutiny. Not that they failed in strong colors to contrast greatness of soul and goodness with baseness and wickedness, or did not usually conclude with the disgrace and punishment of the latter, but an ostentatious generosity is often favorably exhibited in contrast with duty and justice. Everything good and excellent in their pictures arises more from transient ebullition than fixed principle; they seem to place the virtues in the blood, and close beside them impulses of merely a selfish and instinctive nature hold up their heads, as if they were of nobler origin. There is an incurably vulgar side of human nature, which, when he cannot help but show it, the writer should never handle without delicacy; instead of this, Beau-

mont and Fletcher throw no veil whatever over nature; they express everything bluntly in words; they make the spectator the unwilling confidant of all that purer minds endeavor to hide even from themselves. The indecencies in which these poets indulged go beyond conception. Licentiousness of language is the least evil; many scenes, nay, even whole plots, are so contrived that the very idea, not to mention the beholding of them, is a shock to modesty.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle, by Beaumont and Fletcher—given in this volume—is an incomparable work and singular in its kind. It is a parody of the chivalry romances; the thought is borrowed from *Don Quixote*, but the imitation is handled with freedom, and so particularly applied to Spenser's *Faerie Queen* that it may pass for a second invention. But the novelty of the piece consists in the combination of a chimerical abuse of poetry with the incapacity to comprehend any fable, and the dramatic form more particularly. A grocer and his wife come as spectators to the theatre; they are discontented with the piece which has just been announced; they demand a play in honor of the corporation, and Ralph, their apprentice, is to act a principal part in it. Their humor is complied with; but still they are not satisfied, make their remarks on everything, and incessantly address themselves to the players. Ben Jonson had already exhibited imaginary spectators, but they were either supporters or censurers of the poet's views,

and were used to advance his cause. But the grocer and his wife represent a whole genus, namely, those prosaic spectators, who are destitute of all feeling for art. For them there is no illusion; the subject represented has all the effect of reality; they accordingly resign themselves to the impression of each moment and take part for or against the persons of the drama. For them Ralph, however heroically and chivalrously he may conduct himself, is always Ralph their apprentice; and in the whim of the moment they take upon them to demand scenes which are quite inconsistent with the plan of the piece that has been commenced. In short, the views and demands with which poets are often oppressed by a prosaical public are very cleverly and amusingly personified in these caricatures of spectators, as, without a particle of appreciation for real dramatic action, they watch the apprentice-knight through his strange and adventurous career.

The Faithful Shepherdess.

The Faithful Shepherdess, a pastoral, is highly extolled by some English critics, as it is without doubt finished with great care, in rhymed and partly in lyrical verses. Fletcher wished also to be classical for once, and so did violence to his natural talent. Perhaps he had the intention of surpassing Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*; but the composition which he has ushered into the world is as heavy as that of the other was easy and aerial. The piece is overcharged with mythology and rural painting, is untheatrical, and

so far from portraying the genuine ideality of a pastoral world, it is filled with vulgarities.

The Two Noble Kinsmen.

The Two Noble Kinsmen is held to be the joint production of Shakespeare and Fletcher. The play, it is true, did not make its appearance till after the death of both; but there is no apparent motive with the editor or printer for any deception, as Fletcher's name was at the time in greater celebrity than Shakespeare's. We think we can perceive the mind of Shakespeare in a certain ideal purity, which distinguishes this piece from all others of Fletcher's, and in the conscientious fidelity with which the story adheres to that of Chaucer's *Palamon and Arcite*. In the style Shakespeare's hand is at first discoverable in a brevity and fullness of thought bordering on obscurity. The first acts are most carefully elaborated; afterward the piece is drawn out to too great a length and with an epic treatment, while the dramatic law of quickening the action toward the conclusion is not sufficiently observed.

The Scornful Lady.

In pure comedy, varied with broad farce and mock-heroic parody, Beaumont was the earliest as well as the ablest disciple of the master whose mantle was afterward to be shared among the academic poets of a younger generation. The best example of the school of Jonson to be found outside the ample range of his work

is *The Scornful Lady*, a comedy whose exceptional success and prolonged popularity must have been due to the broad effect of its forcible situations, its wealth and variety of ludicrous incidents and the strong gross humor of its dialogue, rather than to any finer quality of style, invention or character. It is, moreover, as coarse as the coarsest work of Ben Jonson, and this is saying much.

Beaumont and Fletcher Contrasted.

The buoyant and facile grace of Fletcher's style carries him lightly across quagmires in which a heavier-footed poet would have stuck fast, and come forth bemired to the knees. To Beaumont his stars had given as birthright the gifts of tragic pathos and passion, of tender power and broad, strong humor; to Fletcher had been allotted a more fiery and fruitful force of invention, a more aerial ease and swiftness of action, a more various readiness and fullness of bright exuberant speech. The genius of Beaumont was deeper, sweeter, nobler than his elder's; the genius of Fletcher more brilliant, more supple, more prodigal and more voluble than his friend's. No surer test or better example can be taken of the distinctive quality which denotes the graver genius of either poet than that supplied by the comparison of Beaumont's *Triumph of Love* with Fletcher's *Triumph of Death*. Each little play, in the brief course of its single act, gives proof of the peculiar touch and special trick of its author's hand; the deeper and more delicate passion of Beaumont, the rapid and ardent activity of Fletcher, have nowhere found a more notice-

able vent for the expression, on the one hand, of tender simplicity and sweetness, on the other, of the buoyant and impatient energy of tragic emotions. Rich as are some of Fletcher's writings, he may claim a higher and more special station among his dramatic peers by right of his comic and romantic than of his tragic and historical plays. Even in the latter he is more a romantic than a tragic poet. The quality of his genius, never sombre or subtle or profound, bears him always toward fresh air and sunshine. His natural work is in the midday world of fearless boyish laughter and hardly bitter tears. There is always more of rainbow than of storm in his skies; their darkest shadow is but a tragic twilight. What with him is the noon of night would seem as sunshine on the stage of Ford or Webster. In pure comedy, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* is the acknowledged masterpiece of Fletcher, and next to it we might place, for comic spirit and force of character, *Wit Without Money*, *The Wildgoose Chase*, *The Chances* and *The Noble Gentleman*, the last a broad poetic farce overflowing with fun and extravagance.

Shirley.

James Shirley, in the opinion of Charles Lamb, "claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself as that he was the last of a great race"—the race, that is, which gathers around Shakespeare, for of his own lineage there was nothing special to boast. Born in London, in 1596, he was educated for a profession, first at Merchant

Taylor's school and then at Oxford and Cambridge. The church was his destination; but as he had turned Roman Catholic, he betook himself to teaching for a livelihood.

While Shirley was thus engaged at St. Alban's, his first play, the comedy of *Love Tricks*, was accepted, and this was probably the greatest misfortune of his life, for it turned an excellent teacher into an indifferent dramatist. For eighteen years he was a prolific writer for the stage, producing more than thirty pieces, and showing no sign of exhaustion when, in 1642, a Puritan edict put a stop to his occupation. Again he turned teacher, and prospered, publishing educational works, together with a collection of poems and masks written during this period of dramatic eclipse. Though some of his comedies were revived in the reign of Charles II, he did not again write for the stage, and died, as is said, together with his second wife, from the effects of fright caused by the great fire of 1666.

That Shirley's plays were not without merit is shown by their publication, as late as 1833, in six volumes, with notes by Gifford and Dyce. If they are lacking in original force, they show much stage-craft and manipulative dexterity. He was born, it must be remembered, to great dramatic wealth, and he handled it freely and skillfully. He did not, like some of his more famous predecessors, take his plots from romance or history, but out of the abundance of materials that had been accumulated by more originative men during thirty years of unexampled dramatic activity. He did not strain after novelty of situation or character, but worked with

confident ease and copiousness on the familiar lines, contriving situations and drawing characters after types whose effectiveness on the stage had been fully proved by experience. His style has not the true ring of the great dramatist, but appears rather as the knack of a clever workman, and is often employed in a strained and artificial elevation of commonplace thought. Yet his poetic diction is not without ease and spirit; his scenes are ingeniously conceived; his characters boldly and clearly drawn, and he has a thorough knowledge of stage effect.

Massinger.

Philip Massinger ranks as one of the most scholarly and powerful dramatists of his day. Born in 1584, he went to Oxford in 1602, and the only fact that we know of him between his leaving the university in 1606 and having a comedy performed at court in 1621, is that he, with Field and Daborne, also playwrights, asked for an advance of five pounds from Henslowe, the theatrical capitalist, because they were "in unfortunate extremities." In his part of the document Massinger says that he has "ever found" Henslowe "a true, loving friend," an expression which seems to point to his having been connected with plays and players for some considerable time. After 1621 many of his plays were acted and published; but from the tone of his dedications it is to be inferred that he was often in pecuniary straits. The entry in the parish register of St. Savior's—"March 20, 1639, buried Philip Massinger, a stranger"—may mean only that he was not a resident in the parish; but it is

sadly out of keeping with the dramatist's place in the estimation of posterity. The evidence that he was a Roman Catholic at the time when the creed was held under heavy pains and penalties rests chiefly upon three of his plays, *The Virgin Martyr*, *The Renegado* and *The Maid of Honor*, in the first of which he was assisted by Dekker. At least it is certain that only a Roman Catholic audience could be expected to enter into the spirit of these plays and applaud at the end; and it is remarkable that they were allowed to appear at all in the reign of James I.

The Virgin Martyr.

This piece, founded on the martyrdom of Dorothea in the time of Diocletian, is, in effect, an old miracle play in five acts. The devil himself appears on the stage—first in human form as the servant of a persecutor, hunting out victims and instigating the most cruel tortures; afterward in “a fearful shape,” with fire flashing around him. The page of the martyr Dorothea is an angel in disguise, who also appears in his own proper shape before the end of the play. Dorothea is tortured on the stage in the most revolting fashion, dragged about by the hair, kicked and beaten with cudgels, but her page Angelo stands by, and she is miraculously preserved from hurt. Other miracles are performed. A persecutor falls down in a fit when about to subject the martyr's constancy to the foulest trials. In the last act a basket of fruit from paradise is brought on, and the chief prosecutor eating of it is wholly changed in spirit

and drives away his diabolic servant by holding up a cross of flowers. At the close the martyrs appear in white robes, transfigured. The piece further resembles the miracle play in the coarseness of the comic scenes intended to illustrate the power of the devil over the most base and grovelling natures; but the tone of the play throughout is serious and lofty, and the passions of the persecutors and the heroic devotion of the martyrs are given with great dramatic force.

The Renegado.

This is, in truth, a very remarkable production to have appeared suddenly amid the run of secular pieces. It seems, however, to have been popular, and was several times reprinted before the Restoration. It is a powerfully-constructed play, strong in character and incident. Massinger's leaning to Roman doctrine is supposed to be shown by his making one of his heroines—a converted Turk and a sultan's sister—experience complete spiritual transformation after receiving the rite of baptism. But there is a more suggestive and stranger fact than this. The hero, Francisco, is a Jesuit priest, treated with profound respect throughout, a man of noble, unselfish aims, running all risks to save and gain souls, exercising the strongest moral influence for the wisest and most benevolent purposes. Francisco's influence pervades the play, and is crowned with triumph at the end. He sails back to Venice with a noble lady rescued from the Turk, her virtue protected by an amulet during her captivity, a renegade military hero

restored to his country and the church, and the beautiful sister of the sultan converted to Christianity. That a London audience tolerated this glorification of a Jesuit within twenty years of the Gunpowder plot is an extraordinary fact.

A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

It may be doubted whether Massinger was ever a popular dramatist. His poverty is not, indeed, conclusive on this point, for the prices paid for plays were so small that a dramatist could hardly make a livelihood by play-writing, unless he was also an actor or a theatrical manager. But the best qualities of his plays appeal rather to thoughtful politicians, moralists and students of character than to the simple feelings of the ordinary playgoer. Only one of them, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*—given in the preceding volume—still holds the stage, chiefly because the leading character, Sir Giles Overreach, a sort of commercial Richard III, a compound of “the lion and the fox,” provides many opportunities for a great actor. Like all Massinger’s plays, it is most ingenious and effective in construction, but in this, as in others, he has been more intent upon the elaboration of a plot and the exhibition of a ruling passion than upon winning the love and admiration of his audience for heroes and heroines. There are few more stirring scenes in dramatic story than are here provided for the actor who personates the avaricious Overreach. Kemble, Kean and Junius Brutus Booth gloried in the part, and many who heard them give the speech of Sir

Giles, furious with impotent rage, have testified to this as being one of their most memorable experiences of the stage.

With the exception of this play, the rest by Massinger have been relegated to the study since his own time. *The Fatal Dowry*, in which Massinger had the assistance of Field, was partially resuscitated by Rowe, being made the basis of the *Fair Penitent*. In Massinger's own judgment, the *Roman Actor* was "the most perfect birth of his Minerva." It is, in effect, a study of the tyrant Domitian, and of the results of despotic rule on the despot himself and his court; the intrigues and counter intrigues, the rise of sycophancy, the fall of honesty, the growth of the appetite for blood, the growth and final triumph of the spirit of revenge are exhibited with great power. Among the dramatists of this period, Massinger comes next to Shakespeare in the art of opening and developing a plot, and in this respect the *Bondman*, the *Duke of Milan* and the *Great Duke of Florence* are favorable specimens of his power. The manners and the characters are always clearly conceived, although the dramatist's strength is put forth in the portrayal of some one ruling passion. The action always marches forward steadily, with as little as possible of irrelevant digression. The language is never mean and never turgid, but in impassioned situations it wants fire and directness. Nineteen of the plays of Massinger are still extant, and of these a careful edition has been prepared by Gifford. By some critics he is preferred to Beaumont and Fletcher, and is esteemed as approaching more nearly to Shakespeare than any of his contemporaries.

Several of Massinger's plays have been lost, eight being accidentally destroyed by a cook. All that remain, with the exception of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, have long since been relegated to the closet; but there are several which deserve a better fate. Among them is the *Maid of Honor*, though the conclusion is one with which only an assemblage of very pious Catholics could have sympathized. In the final act the heroine relieves a very complicated situation by taking the veil, donating a third of her property to pious uses, a third to a nunnery, and the remaining third to an honest and faithful, but unsuccessful lover. For this she is held up to all posterity as "a fair example for noble maids to imitate."

III.

The Restoration Drama.

A reaction from the restraints of Puritanism was inevitable when "the king came into his own again." The restoration of the drama came with that of the monarchy. It brought into England the over-freedom of stage morals and manners which flourished in Paris under Molière's wand. Up to the outbreak of the civil war the drama in all its forms continued to enjoy the favor of the court, although a close supervision was exercised over all attempts to make the stage the vehicle of political references or allusions. The theatre could hardly expect to be allowed a liberty of speech in reference to matters of state denied to the public at large; and occasional attempts to indulge in the freedom of criticism dear to the spirit of comedy met with more or less decisive repression and punishment. But the sympathies of the dramatist were so entirely on the side of the court that the real difficulties against which the theatre had to contend came from a directly opposite quarter. With the growth of Puritanism the feeling of hostility to the stage increased in a large part of the population, well represented by the civic authorities of

the capital. This hostility found many ways of expressing itself. Three attempts to suppress the Blackfriars theatre proved abortive; but the representation of stage plays continued to be prohibited on Sundays, and during the prevalence of the plague in London was temporarily suspended, as were amusements of every description, though this was a time when some diversion from the surrounding horrors was most required.

Puritan Opposition.

The desire of the Puritans of the more pronounced type openly aimed at a permanent closing of the theatres. The war between them and the dramatists was accordingly of a life-and-death character. On the one hand, the drama heaped its bitterest and often coarsest attacks upon whatever savored of the Puritan spirit; gibes, taunts, caricatures in ridicule and aspersion of Puritans and Puritanism make up a great part of the comic literature of the later Elizabethan drama and of its aftergrowth in the reigns of the first two Stuarts. This feeling of hostility, to which Shakespeare was no stranger, rose into a spirit of open defiance in some of the masterpieces of Ben Jonson; and the comedies of his contemporaries and successors abound in caricatured reproductions of the more common or more extravagant types of Puritan life. On the other hand, the moral defects, the looseness of tone, the mockery of ties sanctioned by law and consecrated by religion, the tendency to treat middle-class life as the hunting-ground for the amusements of the upper classes, which degraded so

much of the dramatic literature of the age, intensified the Puritan opposition to all and any stage plays.

A Puritan Ordinance.

A patient endeavor to reform instead of suppressing the drama was not to be looked for from such adversaries, should they ever possess the means of carrying out their views; and so soon as Puritanism should victoriously assert itself in the state, the stage was doomed. The civil war began in August, 1642, and early in the following month was published the ordinance of the Lords and Commons, which commanded "that while those sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage plays shall cease and be forborne." Most of the actors and playwrights entered the army of the king; many perished for his cause, and the survivors returned to London and continued to exercise their art in secret. Out of the ruins of all the former companies of actors, one alone was formed, which occasionally, though with very great caution, gave representations at the country seats of the great, in the vicinity of London. For among the other singularities to which the violence of those times gave rise, it was considered a proof of attachment to the old constitution to be fond of plays, and to reward and harbor those who acted them in private houses.

A few dramatic works were published at this period, and at country fairs were acted farces, called drolls, composed of the most vulgar scenes to be found in popular plays. Thus the life of the drama was not abso-

lutely extinct, and its darkest days proved shorter than its friends had feared. The Puritans hoped to serve God by prohibiting every liberal mental entertainment, calculated in any manner to adorn life, and more especially the drama, as being a public worship of Baal, even shutting their ears to church music as a demoniacal howling. If their ascendancy had been maintained much longer, England would have sunk into a condition little removed from barbarism. The oppression of the drama ceased in 1660, when the free exercise of all arts was restored with Charles II.

Influence of Charles II.

The influence which the government of this monarch had on the manners and spirit of the time, and the natural reaction against bigotry and intolerance are sufficiently well known. As the Puritans had brought republican principles and religious zeal into universal odium, so this light-minded monarch seemed expressly born to sport away all respect for the kingly dignity. England was inundated with foreign vices and follies. The court set the fashion of the most undisguised immorality, and its example was the more contagious as people imagined that they could only show their zeal for the new order of things by an extravagant way of thinking and living. The fanaticism of the republicans had been associated with strictness of manners; nothing, therefore, could be more easy and agreeable than to obtain the character of royalists by the extravagant indulgence of all lawful and unlawful pleasures. No-

where was the age of Louis XIV imitated with greater depravity. But the prevailing gallantry of the court of France had a certain reserve and delicacy of feeling; they sinned with some degree of dignity, and no man ventured to attack what was honorable, however at variance with it his own actions might be. The English played a part which was altogether unnatural to them; they gave themselves up to levity; they everywhere confounded the coarsest licentiousness with free mental vivacity, and did not perceive that the kind of grace which is still compatible with depravity disappears with the last veil which it throws off.

We can easily conceive the turn which, under such auspices, the new national taste must have taken. There existed no real knowledge of the fine arts, which were favored merely like other foreign fashions and inventions of luxury. The people neither felt a true want of poetry nor had any relish for it; they merely wished for a light and brilliant entertainment. The theatre, which in its former simplicity had attracted the spectators solely by the excellence of the dramatic works and the skill of the actors, was now furnished out with all the appliances with which we are at this day familiar; but what it gained in external decoration it lost in internal worth.

To Sir William Davenant the English theatre, on its revival after the Commonwealth, owes its new features. He introduced the Italian system of decoration, the costume, as it was then well or ill understood, the operatic music, and, in general, the use of the orchestra. For this undertaking Charles II had furnished him with

extensive privileges. Davenant was a sort of adventurer and wit, in every way worthy of the royal favor, to enjoy which, dignity of character was never a necessary requisite. He set himself to work in every way that a rich theatrical repertory may render necessary; he made alterations of old pieces, and also wrote himself plays, operas and prologues; but of all his writings nothing has escaped oblivion.

Dryden.

Dryden soon became and long remained the hero of the stage. From his influence in fixing the laws of versification and poetical language, especially in rhyme, he acquired a reputation altogether disproportionate to his true merit. Dryden wrote flowing and easy verse; the knowledge which he possessed was considerable, but undigested; and all this was coupled with the talent of giving a certain appearance of novelty to what was borrowed from all quarters. He had, besides, great vanity; he frequently disguises it under humble prologues; on other occasions he speaks out boldly and confidently, avowing his opinion that he has done better than Shakespeare, Fletcher and Jonson—for he places them about on the same level. All the merit of this he is, however, willing to ascribe to the refinement and advance of the age!

Dryden played, also, the part of the critic; he furnished his pieces richly with prefaces and treatises on dramatic poetry, in which he discourses upon the genius of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and about the entirely op-

posite example of Corneille; of the original boldness of the British stage, and of the rules of Aristotle and Horace. He imagined that he had invented a new species, namely, the heroic drama, as if tragedy had not from its very nature been always heroical! If we are, however, to seek for an heroic drama which is not peculiarly tragic, we shall find it among the Spaniards, who had long possessed it in the greatest perfection. From the uncommon facility of rhyming which Dryden possessed, it cost him little labor to compose his serious pieces entirely in rhyme; but this unavoidably communicates a certain stiffness to the dialogue. The manner of the older English poets, who generally used blank verse, and only occasionally introduced rhymes, was infinitely preferable.

The son of a Northamptonshire baronet and his Puritan wife, John Dryden received a thorough classical education, first at Westminster school, under the famous Doctor Busby, and then at Trinity college, Cambridge, where we hear nothing of his career except that he was "gated" and "put out of commons" for some unknown act of contumacy. Coming to London to seek his fortune, he first emerged from obscurity with his *Heroic Stanzas*, in memory of the Protector, whose death occurred in 1658.

Astræa Redux.

From a moral point of view, Dryden's next appearance as a poet is not creditable. To those who regard the poet as a seer with a sacred mission, and refuse the name altogether to a literary manufacturer to order, it

comes with a certain shock to find Dryden, the hereditary Puritan, the panegyrist of Cromwell, hailing the return of King Charles in *Astræa Redux*, deploring his long absence and proclaiming the despair with which he had seen "the rebel thrive, the loyal crost." From a literary point of view, also, *Astræa Redux* is very inferior to the *Heroic Stanzas*; Dryden had need of Waller's clever excuse that it is easier to praise a bad man than a good, because the essence of poetry is fiction. And it was not merely in thus hastening to welcome the coming guest, and recant all praise of his rival, that Dryden showed a shamelessly accommodating spirit and placed himself in such unpleasant contrast to the greater poet who was awaiting his fate in all but friendless blindness. It might have been expected of one with his Puritan connections and scholarly training that, if he purposed making a living by the stage, which was restored with Charles, his literary as well as his moral conscience would have required him to make some effort to raise or at least not to lower its tone. But Dryden seems to have had no higher ambition than to make money by his pen. He naturally first thought of tragedy—his own genius, as he has informed us, inclining him rather to that species of composition; and in the first year of the Restoration he wrote a tragedy on the fate of the duke of Guise. But some friends advised him that its construction was not suited to the requirements of the stage; so he put it aside, and used only one scene of the original play later on, when he again attempted the subject with a more practised hand. In truth Dryden was never a great dramatist in the proper

sense of the term, his stilted versification and clumsy dialogue acting as insuperable obstacles.

Comedies.

Having failed to write a suitable tragedy, Dryden next turned his attention to comedy, although, as he admitted, he had little natural turn for it. He was afterward very frank in explaining his reasons for writing comedy. "I confess," he said, in a short essay in his own defense, "my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humor of this be for low comedy, small accidents and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse. I know I am not so fitted by nature to write comedy; I want that gayety of humor which is required to it. My conversation is slow and dull; my humor saturnine and reserved; in short, I am none of those who endeavor to break jests in company or make repartees. So that those who decry my comedies do me no injury, except it be in point of profit; reputation in them is the last thing to which I shall pretend."

This, of course, was said by Dryden standing at bay; there was some bravado, but also a great deal of frank truth in it. He was really as well as ostentatiously a playwright; the age demanded comedies, and he endeavored to supply the kind of comedy that it required. His first attempt was unsuccessful. Bustle, intrigue and coarsely humorous dialogue seemed to him to be part of the popular demand; and, looking about for a plot, he found something to suit him in a Spanish

source, and wrote *The Wild Gallant*. The play was acted in February, 1663, by Killigrew's company in Vere street. It was not a success, although the most farcical incident acquired a certain interest and probability from a story which was current at the time. That a student, fresh from his library, trying to hit the taste of the groundlings with ribald farce, should make the ingredients too strong even for their palates was but natural. Pepys showed good judgment in pronouncing the piece "so poor a thing as ever I saw in my life." That such a play would be written by Dryden, with one of the daughters of Stephen Marshall in the cast, must have been a bitter thought for Puritanism at the time. Dryden never learned moderation in his humor; there is a student's clumsiness and extravagance in his indecency, and of this he seems to have been conscious, for when the play was revived, in 1667, he complained in the epilogue of the difficulty of comic wit, and admitted the right of a common audience to judge of its success.

Dryden took a lesson from the failure of *The Wild Gallant*; his next comedy, *The Rival Ladies*, founded on a Spanish plot, was correctly described by Pepys as "a very innocent and most witty play," though there was much in it which the taste of our time would consider indelicate. But he never quite conquered his tendency to extravagance. *The Wild Gallant* was not the only victim. *The Assination, or Love in a Nunnery*, produced in 1673, shared the same fate; and even as late as 1680, when he had twenty years' experience to guide him, *Limberham, or The Kind Keeper*, was

prohibited, after three representations, as being too indecent for the stage. Dislike to coarseness we are apt to think a somewhat ludicrous pretext to be made by Restoration playgoers, and probably there was some other reason for the sacrifice of *Limberham*; still, there is a certain savageness in the spirit of Dryden's indecency which we do not find in his most licentious contemporaries. The undisciplined force of the man carried him to an excess from which more dexterous writers held back.

The Indian Queen.

After the production of *The Rival Ladies*, Dryden assisted Sir Robert Howard in the composition of a tragedy in heroic verse, *The Indian Queen*, produced with great splendor in January, 1664. It was probably through this collaboration that Dryden made the acquaintance of Lady Elizabeth Howard, Sir Robert's sister, whom he had married the previous year. Lady Elizabeth's reputation was somewhat compromised before this union, and, though she brought a small addition to the poet's income, she does not seem to have added to his happiness. *The Indian Queen* was a great success, one of the greatest since the reopening of the theatres. This was in all likelihood due much less to the heroic verse and the exclusion of comic scenes from the tragedy than to the magnificent scenic accessories—the battles and sacrifices on the stage, the aerial demons singing in the air and the god of dreams ascending through a trap. The novelty of these Indian spectacles, as well as of the Indian characters, with the splendid

Queen Zempoalla, acted by Mrs. Marshall in a real Indian dress of feathers presented to her by Mrs. Aphra Behn, as the centre of the play, was the chief secret of the success. These melodramatic properties were so marked a novelty that they could not fail to draw the town. The heroic verse formed but a small ingredient in the play; still, being also a novelty which had just been introduced by Davenant in *The Siege of Rhodes*, it interested the scholarly part of the audience, and so helped to consolidate the success of the stage carpenter. Dryden was tempted to return to tragedy; he followed up *The Indian Queen* with *The Indian Emperor*, which also proved a success.

During the great plague, when the theatres were closed and Dryden was living in the country at the house of his father-in-law, he occupied a considerable part of his time in thinking over the principles of dramatic composition, and threw his meditations and conclusions into the form of dialogue, which he called an *Essay of Dramatic Poetry*. One of the main topics was the admissibility of rhyme in serious plays, Dryden making Neander, the interlocutor, who represents himself, repeat with fresh illustrations all that he had before said in its favor. By this time, however, Sir Robert Howard, his brother-in-law, whom he had joined in writing the rhymed *Indian Queen*, had changed his mind about the heroic couplet, and made some offensive comments on Dryden's essay in a preface to *The Duke of Lerma*. Dryden at once replied in a masterpiece of sarcastic retort and vigorous reasoning, publishing his reply as a preface to *The Indian Emperor*. It is by far

the ablest and most complete statement of his views as to the employment of rhymed couplets in tragedy.

Annus Mirabilis.

Before his return to town at the end of 1666, when the theatres were reopened, Dryden wrote his famous *Annus Mirabilis*, on the Dutch war and the Great Fire. The poem is in quatrains, the metre of his *Heroic Stanzas* in praise of Cromwell, which Dryden chose, he tells us, "because he had ever judged it more noble and of greater dignity both for the sound and number than any other verse in use among us." The preface to the poem contains an interesting discussion of what he calls "wit-writing," introduced by the remark that "the composition of all the poems is or ought to be of wit." His description of the Fire is a famous specimen of this wit-writing, and much more careless and daring and much more difficult to sympathize with than the graver conceits in his panegyric of the Protector. In *Annus Mirabilis* the poet apostrophizes the newly-founded Royal Society, of which he had been elected a member.

Secret Love.

From the reopening of the theatres, in 1666, till November, 1681, the date of his *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden produced nothing but plays, and the stage was his chief source of income. *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen*, a tragi-comedy, produced in March, 1667, does not come up to our expectations as the first

fruit of the author's rest from composition and prolonged study of dramatic art. The prologue claims that it is written with pains and thought, by the exactest rules, with strict observance of the unities, and "a mingled chime of Jonson's humor and of Corneille's rhyme;" but it owed its success chiefly to the charm of Nell Gwynne's acting in the part of Florimel. His next play, *Sir Martin Marall*, an adaptation from Molière's *L'Etourdi*, was produced at the Duke's theatre, in the name of the duke of Newcastle. It was about this time that Dryden became a retained writer under contract for the King's theatre, receiving from it £300 or £400 a year, till it was burnt down in 1672, and about £200 for six years thereafter. He was engaged to write three plays a year, and he contributed only ten plays during as many years of his engagement, finally exhausting the patience of his partners by joining in the composition of a play for the rival house.

Low Comedy.

In adapting *L'Etourdi* Dryden did not catch Molière's lightness of touch; his alterations go toward turning the comedy into a farce. There is always a certain coarseness in Dryden's humor, apart from the coarseness of his age—an almost brutal roughness which belongs to the character of the man. *An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*, an adaptation from the younger Corneille, produced by him at the King's theatre in 1668, seemed to Pepys "very smutty, and nothing so good as *The Maiden Queen*." Evelyn

thought it foolish and profane, and was grieved "to see how the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times." *Ladies à la Mode*, another of Dryden's contract comedies, was "so mean a thing," Pepys says, that it was only once acted, and never published. Of his other comedies, only *Marriage à la Mode* was moderately successful; but assuredly they did not fail for want of ribaldry.

Heroic Tragedy.

While Dryden met with such indifferent success in his efforts to supply the demand of the age for low comedy, he struck upon a really popular and profitable vein in heroic tragedy. *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, a Roman play, in which St. Catherine is introduced, and with her some striking supernatural machinery, was produced in 1669. It is in rhymed couplets, but the author did not trust to them solely for success; for, besides the magic incantations, the singing angels, and the view of Paradise, he made Nell Gwynne, who had stabbed herself as Valeria, start to life again as she was being carried off the stage, and speak a riotously funny epilogue, in violent contrast with the serious character of the play. *Almazor and Almahide, or the Conquest of Granada*, a tragedy in two parts, appeared in 1670. It seems to have given the crowning touch of provocation to the wits, who had never ceased to ridicule the popular taste for these extravagant heroic plays. Dryden almost invited burlesque in his epilogues to *The Conquest of Granada*, in

which he charged the comedy of the Elizabethan age with coarseness and mechanical humor, and claimed for his own time and his own plays an advance in these respects.

The Rehearsal.

The Rehearsal, written by the duke of Buckingham, with the assistance, it was said, of Clifford and others, was a severe and just punishment for this boast. Dryden is here unmercifully ridiculed, under the name of Bayes, in allusion to the laureateship granted by the king, with a pension of £300 a year and a butt of canary wine. It is commonly said that Dryden passed over the attack on himself without reply, either because he admitted its justice or because he feared to offend the king's favorite. But this is not strictly so; his answer is contained in the dedication and preface to his *Conquest of Granada*; and in his prose defense of the epilogue he addresses his censors from the eminence of success, saying that "with the common good fortune of prosperous gamesters he can be content to sit quietly." Heroic verse, he assures them, is so established that few tragedies are likely henceforward to be written in any other metre, and he retorts upon their exposure of improbabilities in his plays, by criticising the "ridiculous incoherent stories" of Shakespeare and Jonson.

Ambogna and Aurungzebe.

Dryden did not write many more heroic plays in rhyme; for the ridicule of *The Rehearsal* had probably

destroyed their popularity. His next tragedy, *Amboyna*, an exposition of certain atrocities committed by the Dutch on English merchants in the East Indies, put on the stage to inflame the public mind, in view of the Dutch war, was written, with the exception of a few passages, in prose, and a few others in blank verse. *Aurungzebe* was his last rhymed tragedy, and in the prologue he confessed that he had grown weary of his long-loved mistress rhyme. But the stings of *The Rehearsal* had stimulated him to do his utmost to justify his devotion. He claims that *Aurungzebe* is "the most correct" of his plays, and it is certainly superior, both in versification and in moderation of language, to its predecessors.

All For Love.

After the production of *Aurungzebe* Dryden seems to have rested for an interval from writing, enabled to do so by an additional pension of £100 granted him by the king. During this interval he would seem to have reconsidered the principles of dramatic composition, and to have made a particular study of the works of Shakespeare. The fruits of this appeared in *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, a version of the story of Antony and Cleopatra, which must be regarded as a new departure in his dramatic career, a very remarkable departure for a man forty-seven years of age, and a wonderful proof of his vigor and plasticity of mind. He gave all his strength to *All for Love*, writing the play for himself, as he said, and not for the public.

Carrying out the idea expressed in the title, he represents the two lovers as being more entirely under the dominion of love than Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Shakespeare's Antony is moved by other impulses than the passion for Cleopatra; it is his master motive, but it has to maintain a struggle for supremacy; "Roman thoughts" strike in upon him even in the very height of the enjoyment of his mistress' love; he chafes under the yoke, and breaks away from her of his own impulse at the call of reawakened ambition. Dryden's Antony is so deeply sunk in love that no other impulse has power to stir him; it takes much persuasion and skillful artifice to detach him from Cleopatra even in thought, and his soul returns to her violently before the rupture has been completed. On the other hand, Dryden's Cleopatra is so completely enslaved by love for Antony that she is incapable of using the calculated caprices and meretricious coquetries which Shakespeare's Cleopatra deliberately practises as the highest art of love, the surest way of maintaining her empire over the great captain's heart. It is with difficulty that Dryden's Cleopatra will agree, on the earnest solicitation of a wily counsellor, to feign a liking for Dolabelle to excite Antony's jealousy, and she cannot keep up the pretense, even through a few sentences. The characters of the two lovers are thus very much contracted, indeed almost overwhelmed, beneath the pressure of the one ruling motive.

And as Dryden thus introduces a greater regularity of character into the drama, so he also very much contracts the action, in order to give probability to this

temporary subjugation of individual character. The action of Dryden's play takes place wholly in Alexandria, within the compass of a few days; it does not, like Shakespeare's, extend over several years, and present incessant changes of scene. Dryden chooses, as it were, a fragment of an historical action, a single moment during which motives play within a narrow circle, the culminating point in the relations between his two personages. He devotes his whole play, also, to those relations; only what bears upon them is admitted. In Shakespeare's play we get a certain historical perspective, in which the love of Antony and Cleopatra appears in its true proportions beneath the firmament that overhangs human affairs. In Dryden's play this love is our universe; all the other concerns of the world retire into a shadowy, indistinct background. If we rise from a comparison of the two plays with an impression that the Elizabethan drama is a higher type, we rise also with an impression of Dryden's power such as we get from nothing else that he has written.

It was twelve years before Dryden produced another tragedy worthy of the power shown in *All for Love*. *Don Sebastian* was acted and published in 1690, and in the interval, to sum up briefly Dryden's work as a dramatist, he wrote *Ædipus* and *The Duke of Guise*, in conjunction with Lee; *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Spanish Friar*, *Aibion and Albonius*, an opera, and *Amphitryon*. In *Troilus and Cressida* he follows Shakespeare closely in the plot, but the dialogue is rewritten throughout, and not for the better. The

versification and the language of the first and third acts of *Œdipus*, which, with the general plan of the play were Dryden's contribution to the joint work, bear marked evidence of his recent study of Shakespeare. The plot of *Don Sebastian* is more intricate than that of *All for Love*. It has also more of the characteristics of his heroic dramas; the extravagance of sentiment and the suddenness of impulse remind us occasionally of *The Indian Emperor*; but the characters are much more elaborately studied than in Dryden's earlier plays, and the verse is sinewy and powerful. It would be difficult to say whether *Don Sebastian* or *All for Love* is his better play; they share the palm between them. Dryden's subsequent plays are not remarkable. Their titles are—*King Arthur*, an opera, *Cleomenes* and *Love Triumphant*.

Absalom and Achitophel.

Dryden had now found new and more congenial work for his favorite instrument in satire. As usual the idea was not original to him, though he struck in with his usual energy, and immediately took the lead. His pioneer was Mulgrave's *Essay on Satire*, an attack on Rochester and the court, circulated in 1679. Dryden himself was suspected of the authorship, and cudgelled by hired ruffians as the author; but it is not likely that he attacked the king on whom he was dependent for the greater part of his income. In the same year Oldham's satire on the Jesuits had immense popularity, chiefly owing to the excitement about the Popish plot. Dryden took the field as a satirist, on

the side of the court, at the moment when Shaftesbury, baffled in his efforts to exclude the duke of York from the throne as a papist and secure the succession of the duke of Monmouth, was waiting his trial for high treason. *Absalom and Achitophel* produced a great stir. Nine editions were sold in rapid succession in the course of a year. It was a new thing for the public to have the leading men of the day held up to laughter, contempt and indignation under disguises which a little trouble enabled them to penetrate. There was no compunction in Dryden's ridicule and invective; delicate wit was not one of his gifts; the motions of his weapon were sweeping, and the blow hard and trenchant. The advantage he had gained by his recent studies of character was fully used in his portraits of Shaftesbury and Buckingham, Achitophel and Zimri. In these portraits he shows considerable art in the introduction of redeeming traits to the general outline of malignity and depravity. Against Buckingham he had old scores to pay off; but he was too practised in the language of eulogy and invective to need any personal stimulus. "Glorious John" had a mind superior to petty hatreds, as well as to petty friendships, and it is not impossible that the fact that his pension was in arrears weighed with him in writing this satire to gain the favor of the court.

The Hind and Panther.

Dryden's next poem in heroic couplets was in a different strain. On the accession of James II, in 1685,

he became a Roman Catholic. There has been much discussion as to whether this conversion was or was not sincere. It can only be said that the coincidence between his change of faith and his change of patron was suspicious, and that Dryden's character for consistency is certainly not such as to preclude suspicion. The force of the coincidence cannot be removed by such pleas as that his wife had been a Roman Catholic for several years, or that he was converted by his son, who himself became a convert at Cambridge. Scott defended his conversion, as Macaulay denounced it, from party motives; on any other grounds, it is not worth discussing. Nothing can be clearer than that Dryden, all his life through, regarded his literary powers as a means of subsistence, and had little scruple about accepting a brief on any side. *The Hind and Panther*, published in 1687, is an ingenious argument for Roman Catholicism, put into the mouth of "a milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged." There is considerable beauty in the picture of this tender creature, and its enemies in the forest are not spared. One can understand the admiration that the poem received when such allegories were in fashion. It was the chief cause of the veneration with which Dryden was regarded by Pope, who, himself educated in the Roman Catholic faith, was taken as a boy of twelve to see the veteran poet in his chair of honor and authority at Wills' coffee-house. It was also very open to ridicule, and was treated in this spirit by Prior and Montagu, the future earl of Halifax. *The Hind and Panther* was written in part in the interest of James II, as also was his

eulogy of that monarch, *Britannia Rediviva*, surely an inappropriate title, in the light of national events.

Translations.

It is certainly to Dryden's credit that he did not abjure his new faith on the accession of William III, and so lost his office and pension as laureate and historiographer royal. Thus thrown mainly upon his pen for support, he turned again to the stage and wrote some of the plays which have been enumerated. A great feature in the last decade of his life was his translations from the classics, chief among them being Virgil, on which he worked so hard that great expectations were formed of it. To judge it by its fidelity as a reproduction of the original would be to apply too high a standard; but it is an interesting rendition of Virgil into the style of Dryden, and as a poem was read with delight in his own age. Dryden's life was mainly spent in translating for bread. He had a windfall of five hundred guineas from Lord Abingdon for a poem on the death of his wife in 1691, but generally he was in pecuniary straits. He is supposed to have received occasional presents from rich and powerful friends, but he never received anything from court, and he was too proud to make advances. However, he was not molested in London by the government, and in private he was treated with the respect due to his old age and his admitted position as the greatest of living English poets. His death took place on the 1st of May, 1700.

Dryden's conversion to Catholicism had doubtless a

great influence on the preservation of his fame. It was this which gained him the discipleship and loving imitation of Pope. He thus became, by accident, as it were, the literary father and chief model of the greatest poet of the next generation. If his fame had stood simply upon his merits as a poet he would, in all likelihood, have been a much less imposing figure in literary history. The splendid force of his satire must always be admired, but there is surprisingly little of the vast mass of his writings that can be considered worthy of lasting remembrance. He showed little inventive genius. He was simply a masterly litterateur of immense intellectual energy, whose lucky hit was the clever application of heroic couplets to satire and religious, moral and political argument. Dryden lent his gift of verse to the service of politics, and his fame profited by the connection. It would be unjust to say that his fame was due to this, but it was helped by this; apart from the attachment of Pope, he owed to party also something of the favor of Johnson and the personal championship and editorial zeal of Scott.

Shadwell.

Dryden's successor in the laureateship was Thomas Shadwell, a playwright and miscellaneous versifier of the Restoration period, remembered now not by his works, though he was a prolific writer of comedies highly successful in their day, but as the subject of Dryden's satirical portraits "MacFlecknoe" and "Og." He was a native of Norfolk—not an Irishman, as he re-

torted with significant imbecility when Dryden's satire appeared—went through the forms of study at Cambridge and the Inner Temple, travelled abroad for a season, returned to London, cultivated the literary society of coffee-houses and taverns, and at the age of twenty-eight gained the ear of the stage with *The Sullen Lovers*. For fourteen years thereafter he continued to produce a comedy nearly every year, showing considerable cleverness in caricaturing the oddities of the time. Ben Jonson was his model, but he drew his materials largely from contemporary life; for he was a close observer, and held his own among the wits of the time. In the quarrel with Dryden he was the aggressor. They had been good friends, and Dryden had furnished him with a prologue for one of his comedies; but when the great poet threw in his lot with the court, and satirized the opposition in *Absalom and Achitophel*, Shadwell was rash enough to constitute himself the champion of the true-blue Protestants and wrote a grossly personal and scurrilous attack on the author, entitled *The Medal of John Bayes*. Dryden immediately retorted in *Mac-Flecknoe*, the most powerful and contemptuously scornful personal satire in our language, adding a few more rough touches of supercilious mockery in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, where Shadwell figures as "Og:"

Og from a treason-tavern rolling home,
Round as a globe, and liquored every chink;
Goodly and great he sails behind his link.

Dryden may not be strictly fair when he addresses

his enemy as "thou last great prophet of tautology," and makes Flecknoe extol him because "he never deviates into sense," but Shadwell had fairly earned his chastisement, the sting of which lay in its substantial truth. Nevertheless, on Dryden's resignation of the laureateship, in 1688, Shadwell was promoted to the office, a sign of the poverty of the Whig party, at the time, in literary men.

Otway.

The author of *Venice Preserved* shares with Dryden the chief honors of the classical school of poets, and yet died of want, after a life of misery and abject poverty. His misfortunes were assuredly not due to lack of early training or of later opportunity, and as with many another literary genius, the fault was entirely his own. With rare exceptions the possession of common sense does not seem to consist with the poetic faculty, and especially was this the case with Thomas Otway, one of the most gifted but, in worldly circumstance, one of the most abject among those who shed lustre on an age whose literary excellence was its only redeeming feature. The son of a village rector, Otway completed his education at Christ Church college, Oxford, and straightway tried his fortune as an actor at the Duke's theatre, London. He failed so completely that he never again appeared on the stage, obtaining a cornetcy in a troop of horse, which he held for less than a twelve-month.

At the age of twenty-four we find Otway stranded as a literary adventurer in the wilderness of London,

friendless, penniless, and without the physical or moral stamina needed for so hard an experience. Yet he made an effort. Within a few months his *Alcibiades*, a poor play, was performed with indifferent success at the Duke's theatre. In the following year *Don Carlos*, a vigorous rhymed tragedy, puerile in conception and showing little knowledge of human nature, but full of declamatory energy, took the town fairly by storm. He followed it with translations of Racine's *Berenice*, Molière's *Fourberies de Scapin*, and a very dull and indecent comedy of his own, *Friendship in Fashion*. Then he went to the wars in Flanders, on which he wrote *The Soldier's Fortune*. Soon afterward he produced *The Orphan*, founded on a novel called *English Adventures*, one of the two plays which won for him the exalted rank which he holds among the tragic poets of the Restoration. Yet, as in other instances, where Otway strives after eloquence, his attempted eloquence verges perilously on rant, while the madness of Belvidera approaches dangerously to burlesque. The latter has been cleverly parodied in Sheridan's *Critic*.

In Otway's next effort we have one of those literary freaks for which it is difficult to account, except on the ground of mental aberration. Selecting as the theme of a tragedy the story of Caius Marius, he committed a wholesale but acknowledged plagiarism from *Romeo and Juliet*, taking from it verbally half the scenes of his play, except for disfiguring alterations. Nothing more incongruous can be conceived than to invest this stern episode in Roman history with the exquisite coloring of one of the most pathetic love stories in the world.

The impudence and absurdity of the plagiarism are by no means justified by its confession.

Venice Preserved.

But Otway soon redeemed his fame. Some two years later appeared his masterpiece, *Venice Preserved*, founded on Saint Réal's *Histoire de La Conjuration du Marquis de Bedemar*. The love scenes between Jaffier and Belvidera have seldom been surpassed, and few, indeed, are the plots that have been so skillfully calculated to excite the emotions of an audience. The characters have little of interest; but the circumstances in which they are placed afford scope for the most moving appeals, and merit and demerit are entirely lost sight of in the intensity of human suffering. In pathos, but in this respect only, Otway is the Euripides of the English stage, and his pathos is never strained nor introduced merely for effect, but arises entirely out of the situation. And so it is in *The Orphan*, which is second only to *Venice Preserved*, though banished from the stage by modern fastidiousness, notwithstanding that so strict a censor as Doctor Johnson pronounced it perfectly harmless. In both tragedies the pathos is irresistible; but there is nothing else that rises above mediocrity. The ideas are circumscribed and commonplace; there is no deep insight into the human heart, and what the author intends for eloquence is little better than rant.

Nor does Otway succeed better when he introduces comic elements into his tragedy, and especially is this

apparent in *Venice Preserved*, where what is intended for comedy is often mere indecency. The scenes between Antonio, the old senator, and Aquilina, the courtesan, which delighted the licentious audiences of the days of Charles II are either expunged or deemed unworthy of the play. But there is another reason for this. The part of Antonio was written with an allusion that has long since been forgotten, and hence has lost what used to be its most attractive feature. It exposes the wantonness which disgraced the old age of the first earl of Shaftesbury, and this is indicated in the original prologue—

A senator—

In Venice, none a higher office bore.

Now, when we consider that Shaftesbury had been Lord Chancellor, that his Christian name was Anthony, and that the prologue and epilogue, as first written, expressly declare that certain references in the play were intended to have a political significance, the allusion is sufficiently obvious. Moreover, in the epilogue, Otway expresses the utmost zeal for the cause of the duke of York, afterward James II, of whose attempted exclusion from the throne and virtual exile Shaftesbury was regarded as the chief promoter, and it was during his absence that the piece was first presented. In one of his interviews with Aquilina, Antonio says: "I can make a speech in the senate-house, now and then, would make your hair stand on end." Shaftesbury was extremely vain of his oratory, and

used it freely in his attempts to exclude the duke of York from the succession. In other interviews with the courtesan Antonio reveals in language that is unfortunately in keeping with his shameless character, the follies of wantonness combined with impotence, the despicable and unblushing depravity of his nature, and the conceit of ability and self-importance that clings to him amid all his meanness. While the indecent passages in *Venice Preserved* were passed over without comment by Addison and Johnson, they were noticed by readers and spectators of the drama, many of whom wished they had been omitted. Says the editor of the *Dramatic Censor*, who first brought these facts into public notice in 1752: "I have omitted to make any mention of the scenes between Aquilina, the courtesan, and the old senator, Antonio, as they were a disgrace to the piece, and since the reign of Charles II were never acted above once, when it was damned." The "merry monarch," however, ordered the objectionable scenes to be restored, though they were again consigned to oblivion by the public, who excused his action on the ground of a very imperfect knowledge of English.

Destitution.

Venice Preserved was a decided and immediate success, but it put no money into the author's purse, or not enough to relieve him from a condition of hopeless and abject poverty, further intensified by a sincere but unrequited attachment to a young actress, the leading woman in most of his plays, whom for many years he

loved, not wisely, but too well. He wrote but one more play, and that his poorest; for now he had given himself over to dissipation, and within a few months came the end. While living amid the slums of Tower hill he begged from a passing stranger a crust of bread, and this he devoured with the raven of a famished wolf, so that, as is said, he choked to death while swallowing it. The story is not absolutely confirmed; but whatever the manner of his taking off, there can be no doubt that he died in extreme destitution, and with none to extend a helping hand.

Etherege.

George Etherege, a Londoner who lived between 1636 and 1689, deserves to hold a more distinguished place in dramatic literature than has generally been allotted to him. In a dull and heavy age, he inaugurated a period of genuine wit and sprightliness; he invented the comedy of intrigue, and led the way for the masterpieces of Congreve and Sheridan. Before his time the manner of Ben Jonson had prevailed in comedy, and traditional "humours" and typical eccentricities, instead of real characters, had crowded the comic stage. Etherege paints with a light, faint hand, but it is from nature, and his portraits of fops and beaux are simply unexcelled. No one knows better than he how to present a gay young gentleman, "an unconfinable rover after amorous adventures." His genius is as light as thistledown; he is frivolous, without force of conviction, without principle; but his wit is sparkling, and his style pure and singularly pic-

turesque. No one approaches Etherege in delicate touches of scene and description; he makes the fine airs of London gentlemen and ladies live before our eyes even more vividly than Congreve; but he has less insight and less energy than Congreve. Had he been poor or ambitious he might have been to England almost what Molière was to France, but he was a rich man living at his ease, and he disdained to excel in literature. He was a scion of an ancient and distinguished Oxfordshire family, and was educated at Cambridge, but left the university early to travel in France and Flanders, returning to London to enter one of the Inns of Court. His tastes were those of a fine gentleman, and he indulged freely in pleasure, especially the pleasures of the cup. Soon after the Restoration he composed his comedy of *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, which was brought out in the Duke's theatre in 1664, and printed in the same year. It is partly in rhymed heroic verse, but it contains comic scenes that are exceedingly bright and fresh, with a style of wit hitherto unknown upon the English stage. The success of the play was very great, but Etherege waited four years before he repeated his experiment, meanwhile gaining the highest reputation as a poetical beau, and moving in the circle of Sir Charles Sedley, Lord Rochester, and other noble wits of the day.

In 1668 Etherege brought out *She Would If She Could*, a comedy in many respects admirable, full of action, wit and spirit, but to the last degree frivolous and immoral; so that we seem to move in an airy and fantastic world, where flirtation is the only serious busi-

ness of life. At this time Etherege himself was living a life no less frivolous and unprincipled than those of his own characters. His wealth and wit, the distinction and charm of his manners, won him the general worship of society, and his temperament is best shown by the names his contemporaries gave him, of "gentle George" and "easy Etherege." The age upbraided him for inattention to literature; and at length, after a silence of eight years, he came forward with one more play. *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*, indisputably the best comedy of intrigue written in England before the days of Congreve, was acted and printed in 1676, and had an unbounded success. Besides the merit of its plot and wit, it had the personal charm of being supposed to satirize, or at least to describe, persons well known in London. Sir Fopling Flutter was a portrait of Beau Hewit, the reigning exquisite of the hour; in Dorimant the poet drew the elegant Sir Charles Sedley, and in Medley a portrait of himself; while even the drunken shoemaker was a real character, who made his fortune from being thus brought into public notice.

After this brilliant success Etherege retired from literature; his gallantries and his gambling in a few years deprived him of his fortune, and he looked about him for a rich wife. In 1683 he met with a wealthy elderly widow, who consented to marry him if he made a lady of her. He accordingly got himself knighted, and gained her hand and her money. It is said that before this he had been sent on an embassy to Turkey; and it is certain that soon afterward he was appointed resi-

dent minister in the German court at Ratisbon, where, in 1689, he met his death by accident, as is related.

D'Urfey.

Among the minor lights of the Restoration period was Thomas D'Urfey, satirist, song writer and dramatist. Descended from a family of French Huguenot refugees, and born at Exeter in an unknown year, he was originally intended for the law; but his humor, both in writing and singing songs, procured him access to the highest circles, and made him a favorite even at court. Addison, in the *Guardian*, relates that he remembered more than once to have seen Charles II leaning on Tom D'Urfey's shoulder and humming over a song with him. He was a strong Tory and Protestant, and it is said that his songs had considerable influence in strengthening the cause of his party. His dramatic pieces, numbering more than thirty, were well received, but were so licentious that none of them kept the stage after the dissolute age for which they were written. D'Urfey, by imprudence and extravagance, became poor as he grew old; and having prevailed on the managers of the playhouse to act his comedy of the *Plotting Sisters* for his benefit, Addison wrote two of his articles in the *Guardian*, giving a humorous account of his eccentricities, in order to procure him a full house. He died at an advanced age, and his songs, published in six volumes, under the title of *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, were reprinted in fac-simile in 1872.

IV.

The Later Restoration.

The comedy of the Restoration was chiefly the comedy of manners, and this was continued into the eighteenth century, with little diversity among comic writers. Most of the plays showed little regard to elegance of form, one of the first essentials of comedy, which without it sinks into a mere prosaic imitation of reality and loses its claim to art. It was at this time, moreover, that comedies first began to be written entirely in prose, and here was another form of weakness; for the language used by dramatists became merely that of every-day life, without attempt at polish or refinement. Shakespeare's comic scenes, it is true, were also written mainly in prose; but in mixed comedy, which has a serious or pathetic side, the prose, mingled with the elevated language of verse, serves to mark the contrast between vulgar and ideal sentiments.

Characteristics of English Comedy.

The dramatists of this period had not the art, or did not take sufficient pains, to make their plots com-

plicated. They are not adepts at entangling and disentangling their stories and characters, and their plans lack unity. The existence of a double, or even triple intrigue, has been acknowledged by English critics themselves. The inventions to which they have recourse are often anything but probable, and seldom possess the charm of novelty; they are also deficient in perspicuity and easy development; and worst of all, most of them are much too long. The authors overload their compositions with characters, and we can see no reason why they should not have divided them into several pieces. It is as if we were to compel to travel in the same stage-coach a greater number of persons, all strangers to each other, than there is properly room for; the journey becomes more inconvenient, and the entertainment not a whit more lively.

The great merit of the English comic poets of this period consists in the delineation of character; yet, though many have shown much talent, none have developed any peculiar genius for characterization. Even in this department the older poets—not only Shakespeare, but even Fletcher and Jonson—are superior to them. The former seldom possess the faculty of seizing the most hidden and involuntary emotions, and giving a comic expression to them; they usually draw merely the natural or assumed surface of their characters. Moreover, the same circumstance which in France, after Molière's time, was attended with such prejudicial effects, came here also into play. The comic muse, instead of becoming familiar with life in the middle and lower ranks, affected an air of distinc-

tion; she squeezed herself into courts, and endeavored to assume a resemblance of the beau monde. It was now no longer a national, but a London comedy, turning almost exclusively on fashionable love-suits and fashionable raillery, while the love-affairs are either disgusting or insipid, and the raillery is always puerile and destitute of wit. These comic writers may have accurately hit the tone of their time; in this they only did their duty; but they have reared a lamentable memorial of their age. In few periods has taste in the fine arts been at such a low ebb as about the close of the seventeenth and during the first half of the eighteenth century. The political machine kept its course; wars, negotiations and changes of states, give to this age a certain historical splendor; but comic poets and portrait-painters have revealed to us the secret of its pitifulness in copies of the dresses and imitation of the social tone. If we could now listen to the conversation of the beau monde of that day, it would appear to us as pettily affected and full of tasteless pretension as the hoops, the towering head-dresses, and high-heeled shoes of the women, and the huge perukes, cravats, wide sleeves and ribbon-knots of the men.

Not the least defect of these English comedies is their offensiveness. After all that we have read of the licentiousness of manners under Charles II, we are still lost in astonishment at the audacious ribaldry of Wycherley and Congreve. Decency is not merely violated in the grossest manner in single speeches, and frequently in the whole play; but in the character of the rake, the fashionable debauchee, a moral skepticism

is directly preached, and marriage is the constant subject of ridicule. Beaumont and Fletcher portrayed a vigorous, if immoral nature; but nothing can be more repulsive than rude depravity coupled with claims to higher refinement. Under Queen Anne manners became more decorous; and this may easily be traced in the comedies, in which we may perceive something like a gradation from the most unblushing indecency to a tolerable degree of morality, albeit from prescriptive fame, pieces kept possession of the stage such as no man in the present day would venture to bring out. It is a remarkable phenomenon, the causes of which are deserving of inquiry, that the English nation, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, passed all at once from the opposite way of thinking, to an almost over-scrupulous strictness of manners in social conversation, in the drama, in fiction and in the plastic arts.

Wycherley.

William Wycherley, the typical Restoration dramatist, and one of the greatest masters of the comedy of repartee, was born about 1640 at Clive, near Shrewsbury, where for several generations his family had been settled on an estate yielding about £600 a year. His youth was chiefly spent in France, whither, at the age of fifteen, he was sent to be educated amid the charmed circle of the *précieuses*. His friend, Major Pack, tells us that his hero "improved, with the greatest refinements, the extraordinary talents for which he was obliged to nature." Although the harmless affectations

of the Rambouillets and Montausiers, among whom he was thrown, are certainly not chargeable with the "refinements" of Wycherley's comedies—they seem to have been much more potent in regard to the refinements of his religion.

Though a man of strong intellectual power, Wycherley was a fine gentleman first, a responsible being afterward. Hence, it required no great persuasion to turn him from the Protestantism of his fathers to Romanism, as afterward, at Oxford, with the same easy alacrity, he turned back to Protestantism, under the manipulations of such an accomplished master in the art of conversion as Bishop Barlow. And if, as Macaulay hints, Wycherley's turning back to Romanism once more had something to do with the patronage and liberality of James II, this merely proves that the deity he worshipped was the deity of the polite world of his time—gentility. Moreover, as a professional fine gentleman, at a period when, as the genial Major Pack says, "the amours of Britain would furnish as diverting memoirs, if well related, as those of Nero's court writ by Petronius," Wycherley was obliged to be a loose liver. But, for all that, Wycherley's sobriquet, of "Manly Wycherley," seems to have been fairly earned by that frank and straightforward way of confronting life which, according to Pope and Swift, characterized also his brilliant successor, Vanbrugh.

The effort of Wycherley's to bring to Buckingham's notice the case of Samuel Butler, so shamefully neglected by the court which he had served, shows that even the writer of such heartless plays as *The Country*

Wife was familiar with generous impulses, while his uncompromising lines in defense of Buckingham, when the duke in his turn fell into trouble, show that the inventor of so shameless a fraud as that which forms the pivot of *The Plain Dealer* may in actual life possess the passion for fair-play which is believed to be a specially English quality. But among the ninety-nine religions with which Voltaire accredited England there is one whose permanency has never been shaken—the worship of gentility. To this Wycherley remained faithful to the day of his death; and if his relations to “that other world beyond,” which the Puritans had adopted, were liable to change with his environment, it was because that other world was altogether out of fashion.

Wycherley’s university career seems also to have been influenced by the same causes. Although Puritanism had certainly not contaminated the universities, yet English “quality and politeness”—to use Major Pack’s words—had always, since the Revolution, been rather ashamed of possessing too much learning. As a fellow-commoner of Queen’s college, Oxford, therefore he was entered only as a “student of philosophy,” which meant a student of nothing in particular; and he does not seem to have matriculated or to have taken a degree. Nor when, on quitting Oxford, he entered himself at the Middle Temple, did he give any more attention to the dry study of the law than was proper to one so warmly caressed “by the persons most eminent for their quality or politeness.”

Wycherley’s highest delights were in pleasure and

the stage, and in 1672 he produced at Drury Lane theatre his *Love in a Wood*. With regard to this comedy he told Pope, and repeated his statement until Pope believed him—at least until they quarrelled—that he wrote it the year before he went to Oxford. But we need not believe him; for the worst witness against a man is often himself. To pose as the wicked boy of genius has been the foolish ambition of many writers, but on inquiry it will generally be found that these ink-horn Lotharios are not nearly so wicked as they would have us suppose. When Wycherley charges himself with having written, as a boy of nineteen, scenes so callous and so depraved that even Barbara Palmer's appetite for profligacy was satisfied, there is no need to believe him. Indeed, there is every reason to discredit him; for the whole air and spirit of the piece belong to an experienced and hardened man of the world, and not to a boy who would fain pose as such. Not only in depravity of moral tone, but in real dramatic ripeness, some of the scenes are the strongest to be found among Wycherley's plays. If, indeed, a competent critic were asked to point out the finest touch in all his writings, he would probably select a speech in the third scene of the third act of this very comedy, where the vain, foolish and boastful rake Dapperwit, having taken his friend to see his mistress for the express purpose of advertising his lordship over her, is coolly denied and insolently repulsed. "I think," says Dapperwit, "women take inconstancy from me worse than from any man breathing." The remark is worthy of the hand that drew *Malvolio*; and certain it

is that no mere boy could have described, by this quiet touch, a vanity as impenetrable as the chain-armor which no shaft can pierce.

That the writer of such a play should at once become the talk of King Charles' court was inevitable; equally inevitable was it that the author of the song at the end of the first act, in praise of harlots and their offspring, should touch to its depth the soul of the duchess of Cleveland. Possibly Wycherley intended this famous song as a glorification of her Grace and her profession, for he seems to have been more delighted than surprised when, as he passed in his coach through Pall Mall, he heard the duchess address him from her carriage window as a "rascal," a "villain" and as a son of the very kind of lady his song had lauded. His answer was perfect in its readiness: "Madame, you have been pleased to bestow a title on me which belongs only to the fortunate." Perceiving that she received the compliment in the spirit in which it was meant, he lost no time in calling upon her, and was from that moment the recipient of those favors to which he alludes with pride in the dedication of the play to her. Voltaire's story that the titled dame used to go to Wycherley's chambers in the Temple disguised as a country wench, in a straw hat, shod with pattens and a basket in her hand, may be in part apocryphal, for certain it is that disguise was quite superfluous in the case of the mistress of Charles II. At least it shows how general was the opinion that, under such patronage, Wycherley's fortune as poet and dramatist, "eminent for his quality and politeness," was now assured.

In *The Relapse*, the third of Wycherley's plays, the mistake of introducing the element of farce damages a splendid comedy, but leaves it a capital play still. In *The Gentleman Dancing Master* this mingling of discordant elements destroys a piece that would never, under any circumstances, have been strong, but which abounds in animal spirits and is luminous here and there with true dramatic points. It is, however, on his two last comedies, *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer*, that Wycherley's fame must rest as a master of that comedy of repartee which, inaugurated by Etherege, and afterward brought to perfection by Congreve and Vanbrugh, supplanted the humoristic comedy of the Elizabethans.

The Country Wife.

The Country Wife is so full of wit, ingenuity, animal spirits and lively humor that, had it not been for its motive—as repulsive to the most lax as to the most moral of readers—it would probably have survived as long as the acted drama retained a literary form in England. So strong, indeed, is the hand that could draw such a character as Marjory Pinchwife, as Sparkish and Horner, the latter the undoubted original of all those cool, impudent rakes with whom the English stage has since been familiar, that Wycherley is certainly entitled to a place alongside Congreve and Vanbrugh. It seems difficult to deny that Wycherley is the most vigorous of the three. In order to do justice to the merits of *The Country Wife* we have only to compare it with *The Country Girl*, afterward made famous

by the acting of Mrs. Jordan, the play in which Garrick endeavored to free Wycherley's comedy of its load of licentiousness by altering and sweetening the motive, as Voltaire afterward endeavored to purify the motive of *The Plain Dealer* in *La Prude*. While the two versions of Garrick and Voltaire are as dull as the *Æsop* of Bour-sault, the texture of Wycherley's dialogue would seem to scintillate with the changing hues of a shaken prism, were it not that the many-colored lights rather suggest the miasmatic radiance of a foul ditch shimmering in the sun.

The Plain Dealer.

And hardly inferior to *The Country Wife* is *The Plain Dealer*, of which Voltaire said: "I know of no comedy, ancient or modern, that has so much spirit." It is, indeed, impossible to overestimate the immense influence of this comedy, as regards manipulation of dialogue, upon all subsequent comedies of repartee, from those of Congreve and Vanbrugh to those of Douglas Jerrold and T. W. Robertson; and, as to characters, he who would trace the ancestry of Tony Lumpkin and Mrs. Harcastle has only to turn to Jerry Blackacre and his mother, while Manly, for whom Wycherley's early patron, the duke of Montausier, sat, though he is perhaps overdone, has dominated this kind of stage character ever since. Few, perhaps, are aware how constantly the blunt sententious utterances of the last of these personages have reappeared, not on the stage alone, but in the novel and even in poetry. If the comedy itself is extinct, this is because a play

whose motive is monstrous and intolerable can only live in a monstrous and intolerable state of society; it is because Wycherley's genius was followed by Nemesis, who always dogs the footsteps of the defiler of literary art. But while we can excuse Macaulay's indignation at what he terms this "satyr-like defilement of art," the literary richness of the play almost nullifies the value of the criticism.

Probably none of the plays of this period have been so frequently quoted and adapted. Take, for instance, Manly's fine saying to Freeman in the first act: "I weigh the man, not his title, 'tis not the king's stamp can make the metal better or heavier." This we have in one of Burns' most famous couplets:

The rank is but the guinea stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that.

And so when, in *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne says: "Honors, like impressions upon coin, may give an ideal and local value to a bit of base metal, but gold and silver will pass all the world over without any other recommendation than their even weight." But it is in the fourth and fifth acts that the coruscations of Wycherley's comic genius are the most dazzling; it is there, also, that the licentiousness is most astounding. Not that the worst scenes in this play are really more wicked than those from other dramatists, but they are more seriously imagined, and being less humorous, they are more terribly and earnestly realistic. They form, indeed, a striking instance of the folly of the artist who

selects a story which cannot be dramatised without hurting the finer instincts of human nature.

Jeremy Collier.

How brilliant soever it may be, a comedy like Wycherley's strikes at the very root of the social compact upon which civilization rests. As to comparing the drama of the Restoration with that of the Elizabethans, Jeremy Collier did but a poor service to the cause he undertook to advocate when he set the occasional coarseness of Shakespeare side by side with the wickedness of Congreve and Vanbrugh. Yet it has been the fashion to speak of Collier's attack as being levelled against the immorality of the Restoration dramatists. It is nothing of the kind; it is an attack upon the English drama generally, with special reference to the case of Shakespeare. While dwelling upon that "noxious and highly immoral play, *Hamlet*," Collier actually leaves unscathed the author of *The Country Wife*, but fastens on Congreve and Vanbrugh, whose plays—profligate enough in all conscience—seem almost decent beside a comedy which savors ever of "the modish distemper."

That such a comedy as Wycherley's should have been received on the stage almost side by side with Shakespeare's heroines shows that in historic and social evolution, as in the evolution of organisms, change and progress are very far from being convertible terms. For the barbarism of the society depicted in his plays was, in the true sense of the word, far deeper and more brutal than any barbarism that has ever existed in Eng-

land within the historic period. If civilization has any meaning at all for the soul of man, the Englishman of Chaucer's time, the Anglo-Saxons of the Heptarchy, nay, those half-naked heroes, who in the dawn of English history clustered along the southern coast to defend it from the invasion of Cæsar, were far more civilized than that *race gangrenée*—the treacherous rakes, mercenary slaves and brazen strumpets of the court of Charles II, who did their best to substitute for the human passion of love, a passion known perhaps even to palæolithic man, the promiscuous intercourse of the beasts of the field. Yet Collier leaves Wycherley unassailed, and classes Vanbrugh and Congreve with Shakespeare!

Wycherley's Marriage.

It was after the success of *The Plain Dealer* that the turning point came in Wycherley's career. The great dream of all the men about town, as is shown in Wycherley's plays, was to marry a widow, young and handsome, a peer's daughter if possible, but in any event rich, and spend her money upon wine and women. While talking to a friend in a bookseller's shop at Tunbridge, Wycherley heard *The Plain Dealer* asked for by a lady who, in the person of the countess of Drogheda, answered all the above requirements. An introduction ensued, then love-making, then marriage—a secret marriage, for, fearing to lose the king's patronage and the income therefrom, Wycherley still thought it politic to pass as a bachelor. Whether because his countenance wore a pensive and subdued expression,

suggestive of a poet who had married a dowager countess and awakened to the situation, or whether treacherous confidants divulged his secret, does not appear; but the news of his marriage oozed out, it reached the royal ears, and deeply wounded the "merry monarch," who had intended to intrust to him the education of his son. Wycherley lost the appointment that was so nearly within his grasp; lost, indeed, the royal favor forever. He never had an opportunity of regaining it, for the countess seems to have really loved him, and *Love in a Wood* had proclaimed the writer to be the kind of husband whose virtue prospers best when closely guarded at the domestic hearth. Wherever he went the countess followed him, and when she did allow him to meet his boon companions it was in a tavern in Bow street, opposite his own house, and even there under certain protective conditions. In summer or in winter he was obliged to sit with the window open and the blinds up, so that his wife might see that the party included no member of a sex for which her husband's plays had advertised his partiality. She died at last, however, and left him the whole of her fortune.

But the title to the property was disputed; the costs of litigation were heavy—so heavy that the poet's father was unable or unwilling to come to his aid; and the result of his marrying the rich, beautiful and titled widow was that Wycherley was thrown into the Fleet prison. There he languished for seven years, being finally released by the liberality of James II, which, incredible as it seems, is too well authenticated to be challenged. James had been so much gratified by see-

ing *The Plain Dealer* acted that, finding a parallel between Manly's "manliness" and his own, such as no spectator had before discovered, he paid off Wycherley's execution creditor. Other debts still troubled him, however, and he never was released from his embarrassments, not even after succeeding to a life estate in the family property.

As we come to Wycherley's death we come to the worst allegation that has been made against him. At the age of seventy-five he married a young girl, and is said to have done so in order to spite his nephew, the next in succession, knowing that he himself must shortly die and that the jointure would impoverish the estate. No doubt it is true enough that he married the girl and died a few days afterward; but, if we consider that the lady was young and an heiress, or supposed to be an heiress, and if we further consider how difficult it was for an old gallant of Wycherley's personal vanity to realize his true physical condition, we may well suppose that, even if he talked about "marrying to spite his nephew," he did so as a cloak for other impulses, such as senile desire or senile cupidity, or a blending of both.

Vanbrugh.

Sir John Vanbrugh, dramatist and architect, was the son of a wealthy sugar-baker in Cheshire and grandson of a Protestant refugee of Ghent. From a passage in one of his letters it is supposed that he was born in the Bastille, though in what year is uncertain, probably in 1666. He was educated in France, but what

he learnt there, whether architecture or merely the art of good-fellowship, is a question that has been variously answered by those who, like Sir Joshua Reynolds, admire Blenheim and Castle Howard, and those who, like the wits of Vanbrugh's time, scoff at them. This, however, is certain, that after his return from the continent to England what he did was not to study architecture, but to work with a gusto and success at the art of pleasing, which he found to be the true Aladdin's lamp of social life. His first step toward becoming a power in society was to enter the army, though, perhaps, had he begun life in any other way, his advance would have been just as rapid; for, strong as are social conditions, character is stronger still, and Vanbrugh's equipment—wit, tempered by good humor, a genuine feeling of comradeship, an exceedingly fine presence and a winsome face, according to Kneller's portrait—would, under any circumstances, have been irresistible.

One of the points of difference between the dialogue in Vanbrugh's and Congreve's comedies is this: we feel that the characters of the former talk as Vanbrugh must have talked; we feel that the characters of the latter talk, not as Congreve talked, but as Congreve wrote. We feel that, while such dazzling sword-play as Congreve's would in society have chilled, even as it illumined the air, talk so hearty, good-humored, frank and daring as we get in Vanbrugh's plays would have made the fortune of any man of fashion, made it as certainly at a Roman supper-party in the time of Augustus as at a London drinking-bout in the days of Queen Anne. It is no wonder that he was a favorite,

no wonder that the two best haters of the time, Swift and Pope, tried in vain to hate the "man of wit and honor." During the martial period of his life, Vanbrugh wrote the first sketches of the *Relapse* and the *Provoked Wife*. These he showed to Sir Thomas Skipworth, one of the shareholders of Drury Lane, and with fortunate results.

The Relapse.

In 1695 Vanbrugh was offered—whether through the court interest which he had secured or because he had really acquired a knowledge of architecture in France is not known—the post of secretary to the commission for endowing Greenwich hospital. He accepted it, and by way of fulfilling his functions as an architect completed his *Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*. It was produced, as a sequel to Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift*, at Drury Lane, in 1697. When a comic dramatist of the school of Wycherley confesses that the fine gentleman of his play, "drinking his mistresses' health in Nantes brandy from six in the morning to the time he waddled upon the stage in the evening, had toasted himself up to such a pitch of vigor" that something too outrageous even for such an audience seemed imminent, we may assume that he has enjoyed a satisfactory first night. The success was so marked that Montague, afterward Lord Halifax, asked at once for Vanbrugh's *Provoked Wife* for the theatre in Lincoln's Inn fields, and it was produced at that house in the following year. All that could be said in answer to those who condemned it on account of its unblushing

libertinism was that Sir John Brute is sufficiently brutal to drive any woman into rebellion, and that since the Restoration a wife's rebellion and a wife's adultery were synonymous terms. The play was a complete triumph, and long remained on the boards.

Æsop.

And now, having succeeded as a man of fashion, as an architectural commissioner, and as a comic dramatist of the school of Wycherley, Vanbrugh turned his attention to morals. Though *Æsop*, produced at Drury Lane, was an adaptation of Boursault's dramatic sermon on the same subject, it was an improvement on the French play. As usual with Vanbrugh, who never did things by halves, he surpassed the Frenchman on the very point where the Frenchman had been pronounced unsurpassable. Just as in the *Relapse*, when he aspired to be merry, his merriment had entirely eclipsed that of Cibber's play, so now, when he aspired to surpass the Frenchman in gravity, he achieved a kind of dullness, compared with which the owl-like gravity of Boursault was as the wit of Voltaire. In a word, the humor of the piece lies in the fact that it was written by the author of the *Relapse* and the *Provoked Wife*. The play ran for a week only. Vanbrugh, accepting the failure with his usual good temper, seems then to have turned his attention completely to architecture; for the adaptation in 1700 of the *Pilgrim* of Beaumont and Fletcher, and the production in 1702 of *A False Friend*, could hardly have engaged his serious efforts at all, so

perfunctory are they and so inferior to all that he had done before.

Vanbrugh's Theatre.

Castle Howard, in Yorkshire, which he had built for the earl of Carlisle, was a great success so far as pleasing his patron, who as a reward gave him yet another opening in life by presenting him—the most ignorant man, perhaps, in England of heraldry—with the tabard of Clarencieux king-at-arms. But, if the dangerous moment in every man's life is when he has just scored a brilliant success, it is especially so with genial glowing natures like Vanbrugh's. It seems to have been the success of Castle Howard that caused him to entertain the rash project of building a theatre, from his own design, for the acting of his own plays. The joyous confidence with which, having persuaded thirty people in the fashionable world to aid him in finding the money, and Congreve to aid him in finding the plays, he began to build in perfect unconsciousness of the danger before him, is the only passage in his life which may be called pathetic, save, of course, his struggle with the "wicked woman of Marlborough." No doubt any architect who builds a theatre is always in danger of letting his ideas run riot in the wide field of experiment, but he who builds a theatre for his own plays seems doomed by the malice aforethought of fate. The magnitude of Vanbrugh's architectural ideas grew as the work went on, and with the ideas the structure grew till a theatre meant for the delicate bijouterie work of polite comedy seemed to be assuming the pro-

portions of the Roman Colosseum. Whether Congreve endeavored to put a check upon his friend's architectural and dramatic fervor does not appear; but it must be remembered that not only Vanbrugh's plays, but his own were to be acted there, and, although Congreve was possessed of great sagacity, no man, not even he who pretended to set his gentility above his genius, is sagacious when confronted by the surpassing excellence of his own works.

When at length the time came to test the acoustics of the building, it was found to be sadly defective, though what changes were made to rectify the errors of structure is not recorded. The theatre was opened to the public with an Italian opera, which was followed by three of Molière's comedies, and these by the *Confederacy*, Vanbrugh's masterpiece on the whole, though perhaps its finest scenes are not equal to those in the *Relapse*.

Congreve.

William Congreve, one of the greatest English masters of pure comedy, was born, according to the latest and likeliest accounts, in 1670; according to the inscription on his monument, in 1672; and whether in England or in Ireland, has likewise been matter of doubt and dispute. To Ireland, at all events, is due the credit of his education—as a schoolboy at Kilkenny, and as an under-graduate at Dublin. From college he came to London, and was entered as a student of law at the Middle Temple. The first fruits of his authorship appeared under the boyish pseudonym of Cleophil,

in the form of a novel, whose existence is now remembered only through the unabashed avowal of so austere a moralist as Dr. Johnson, that he "would rather praise it than read it."

The Old Bachelor.

In 1693 Congreve's real career began with the brilliant production and instant success of his first comedy, *The Old Bachelor*, under the generous auspices of Dryden. The discrowned laureate had never, he said, seen such a first day; and indeed the grace of the dialogue was as yet only to be matched by the last and best work of Etherege, standing, as till then it had done, alone among the barefaced brutalities of Wycherley and Shadwell.

The Double Dealer.

The gift of one place and the reversion of another were the solid fruits of this splendid success. Next year a better play from the same hand met with worse fortune on the stage, and with yet higher honor from the first living poet of his nation. The noble verses, as faultless in the expression as reckless in the extravagance of their approbation, prefixed by Dryden to *The Double Dealer*, must naturally have supported the younger poet, if indeed such support was required, against the momentary annoyance of assailants whose passing clamor left uninjured and secure the fame of his second comedy. The following year witnessed the crowning triumph of his art and life, in the appearance

of *Love for Love*. Two years later his ambition rather than his genius adventured on the field of tragedy, and *The Mourning Bride* began such a long career of good fortune as in earlier or later times would have been impossible for a far better work. Next he attempted, without his usual success, a reply to the attack of Jeremy Collier "on the immorality and profaneness of the English stage"—an attack which, however malignant, was not discreditable to the assailant.

Art itself, more than anything else, had been outraged and degraded by the recent school of the Restoration; and the comic work of Congreve, though different rather in kind than in degree from the bestial and blatant license of his immediate precursors, was inevitably for a time involved in the sentence passed upon the comic work of men in all ways his inferiors. The true and triumphant answer to all possible attacks of honest men or liars, brave men or cowards, was then, as ever, to be given by the production of work unsailable alike by fair means or foul, by frank impeachment or furtive imputation. Congreve thus replied to Collier with the crowning work of his genius, a well-nigh perfect masterpiece of English comedy. The one play in our language which may fairly claim a place beside or but just beneath the mightiest work of Molière is *The Way of the World*. But on the stage, which had recently acclaimed with uncritical applause the author's more questionable appearance in the field of tragedy, this final and flawless evidence of his incomparable powers met with a rejection then and ever since inexplicable. It may, in truth, be said of Congreve, as of

Shakespeare and other great dramatists of olden times, that he was not appreciated until after his death. Such, however, was the fate of Milton and others whom the nation loves.

Death.

During the twenty-eight years which remained to him, Congreve produced little beyond a volume of fugitive verses. His even course of good fortune under Whig and Tory governments alike was counterweighed by the physical infirmities of gout and failing sight. He died in 1729, in consequence of an injury received on a journey to Bath by the upsetting of his carriage, and he was buried in Westminster abbey, after lying in state in the Jerusalem chamber. He bequeathed the bulk of his fortune to the chief friend of his last years, Henrietta, duchess of Marlborough, daughter of the great duke, and not to his family, which, according to Johnson, was then in difficulties, or to Mrs. Bracegirdle, the actress, with whom he had lived longer on intimate terms than with any other mistress or friend, but who inherited by his will only £200.

Reputation.

The fame of Congreve is founded mainly on three of his plays. His first comedy was little more than a brilliant study after such models as were eclipsed by this earliest effort of their imitator; and tragedy under his hands appears roughed and wrinkled. But his three great comedies are more than enough to sustain his

reputation. Were it not for these we would have no samples to show of comedy in its purest and highest form. Ben Jonson, who alone attempted to introduce it by way of reform among the mixed work of a time when comedy and tragedy were as inextricably blended on the stage as in actual life, failed to give the requisite ease and the indispensable grace of comic life and movement. Of Congreve's immediate predecessors, whose aim had been to raise on French foundations a new English fabric of simple and unmixed comedy, Wycherley was of too base metal and Etherege was of metal too light to be weighed against him; and besides theirs no other or finer coin was current than the crude British ore of Shadwell's coarse and burly talent. Borrowing a metaphor from Landor, we may say that a limb of Molière would have sufficed to make a Congreve, a limb of Congreve would have sufficed to make a Sheridan. The broad and robust humor of Vanbrugh's admirable comedies gives him a place on the master's right hand; on the left stands Farquhar, whose bright and delicate genius is to Congreve's as moonlight unto sunlight. No English writer has so nearly touched the skirts of Molière; but even his splendid intelligence is wanting in those deeper and subtler qualities which give to the great French dramatist a rank second only to Shakespeare.

Farquhar.

George Farquhar, the successor of Wycherley and Congreve, was the son of an Irish clergyman, London-

derry being his native city and Trinity college, Dublin, his alma mater. He was entered as a sizar or servitor, a class of poor scholars, who were compelled to wear a peculiar dress and perform menial offices. These are no longer exacted from their successors, but Goldsmith, sixty years after Farquhar's admission, had to submit to the same humiliations—to sweep out the college courts, to carry up the fellows' dinner to table, and to wait in the hall till the fellows had dined. It certainly implied a contradiction, as Goldsmith observed, for men to be "at once learning the liberal arts, and at the same time treated as slaves," and neither in the case of Farquhar nor of Goldsmith was the system attended with favorable results. The former soon broke away from his studies, attached himself to a strolling company of players, and after a single season appeared as an actor on the Dublin stage. He had the advantage of a good person, though with a weak voice, but was timid and sensitive, and an accident which happened to him when he had only been a twelvemonth on the boards made him resolve to quit the profession. When performing the part of Guyomar in Dryden's *Indian Emperor*, he had omitted to exchange his sword for a foil, and in a fencing scene wounded a brother performer so severely that his life was endangered. Farquhar never again returned to the stage. The earl of Orrery gave him a lieutenantancy in his regiment then in Ireland, and as a soldier Farquhar is said to have given proofs of his courage and good conduct, though none are recorded. Even in his own letters, written from Holland at this time, no mention is made of his military services. In

the reports of his superior officers, however, there is nothing to his discredit.

The Constant Couple.

While yet a minor Farquhar appeared as a dramatist, producing his comedy of *Love and a Bottle* at Drury Lane when twenty years of age. Its success far exceeded his expectations, and his next comedy, *The Constant Couple*, was still more favorably received. Wilks, a popular comedian and a special friend of Farquhar's, by his performance of the part of Sir Harry Wildair contributed very much to the popularity of the play. "He *made* the part," says Farquhar; but it was the lively acting of the beautiful Peggy Woffington, and the glee and spirit which Mrs. Jordan afterward threw into it, which gave to Sir Harry Wildair a permanent foothold on the stage, his strong animal spirits and untamable vivacity recommending him, for more than a century, to the play-going public.

Sir Harry Wildair.

As a sequel to *The Constant Couple*, Farquhar brought out *Sir Harry Wildair*, with the acting of Wilks again a strong attraction; but like all continuations—that of *Don Quixote* alone excepted—the second part was far inferior to the first. Leigh Hunt tells us that Mrs. Oldfield performed to perfection the character of the heroine, Lady Lurewell. It is even said that she took to the stage by Farquhar's advice, and

certain it is that she played in the two last and best of his comedies. For a time Mrs. Oldfield became the theatrical idol of the day; her exquisite acting and lady-like carriage were the delight of her contemporaries, and her beauty and generosity found innumerable eulogists—

Engaging Oldfield, who, with grace and ease,
Could join the arts to ruin and to please.

In 1702 Farquhar published a volume of "Miscellanies"—poems, letters and a discourse on comedy. The poems are below mediocrity and the letters are written in the overstrained style of gallantry and smartness which was then fashionable and considered witty. In one he gives a lady a picture of himself, "drawn from the life." His mind, he says, was generally dressed, like his person, in black; he was taken for an easy-natured man by his own sex, and an ill-natured clown by the ladies; strangers had a worse opinion of him than he deserved, but this was recompensed by the opinion of his acquaintance, which was above his desert. Self-portraiture is seldom faithful, but we may conclude from this outline that the young dramatist was somewhat grave and reserved, and wanting in address for general society. He was liveliest with the pen in his hand. The discourse on comedy is more worthy of the author than his poems or letters. In it he defends the English disregard of the dramatic unities. "The rules of English comedy," he says, "don't lie in the compass of Aristotle or his followers, but in the pit,

box and galleries." Soon Farquhar had another comedy on the stage—*The Inconstant, or the Way to Win Him*—the hint of which, he says, he took from Fletcher's *Wild Goose Chase*, but was charged with spoiling the original. The poetry of Fletcher certainly evaporates when its scenes are transmuted into the prose dialogue of Farquhar.

Farquhar's Wife.

About this time the dramatist was betrayed into what was perhaps the greatest blunder of his life. A lady conceived a violent passion for him, and, though penniless like himself, contrived to circulate a report that she was possessed of a large fortune. Farquhar snapped at the gilded bait. He married the lady, and found too late that he had been deceived. It is related, however, that he had the magnanimity to pardon a deception which must have appeared a compliment to his genius, and in truth there was something to forgive on his own part for having been so readily entrapped, contrary to all the rules of love and the drama. Increased exertion, however, was necessary, and in 1704 he produced *The Stage Coach*, a piece which he adapted from the French, in conjunction with Anthony Motteux, a clever playwright and essayist, and remarkable as having, though a Frenchman, given to the world the best English translation of *Don Quixote*. Three more comedies were written before Farquhar's career was sadly closed at the age of thirty—*The Twin Rivals*, *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux Stratagem*. The last

two are vastly superior to Farquhar's other plays, and are the works by which he is now remembered.

The Beaux Stratagem was written in six weeks, while death was impending over its author. Before he had finished the second act he knew that he was stricken with a mortal illness, but it was necessary to persevere to be "consumedly lively" to the end; for he had received in advance £30 for the copyright. The play was brought on the stage, and Farquhar lived to have his third night, as was the custom, and an extra benefit on the day, it is said, when he died. He left his two children to the care of his friend Wilks, to whom he writes:

"Dear Bob: I have nothing to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls. Look upon them sometimes and think of him that was to the last moment of his life thine,

"GEORGE FARQUHAR."

Wilks obtained a benefit at the theatre for the dramatist's widow, and the daughters had each a pension of £30 a year, which one of them was receiving as late as 1764.

Farquhar's Works.

The plots of Farquhar's comedies are skillfully conducted and evolved; his situations are well chosen and his dialogues are full of life and spirit. To the polished wit and brilliancy of Congreve he has no pretension. His scenes are light and sketchy, and his characters altogether on a lower level than Congreve's, but they

are quite equal to them in stage effect. He has also several distinct and original characters which long charmed on the stage, while the incidents with which they are mixed—the unexpected encounters, adventures, artifices and disguises—are irresistibly comic and attractive in representation. Pope considered Farquhar a mere farce writer, while Goldsmith, who evidently adopted him as a model, preferred him to Congreve. On the stage, with good actors, he might be so preferred, but never in the library. He had the advantage of being less licentious than Congreve, for he was the cleanest comic writer of his age. Love intrigues then formed the chief business of comedy, and in the management of them the homely domestic virtues that form the happiness and cement of society were disregarded or made the subject of ridicule.

Mrs. Centlivre.

One of the plays of this period which survive in literature and in an occasional performance is *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, a comedy of recognized merit. At first an actress, Susanna Freeman took for her third husband Joseph Centlivre, Queen Anne's chief cook. She was a brilliant woman and enjoyed the friendship of the dramatists of the time. The name of Simon Pure, one of the characters in this play, has long become proverbial.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOR

A COMEDY

BY

BEN JONSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KITELY.

OLD KNOWELL.

YOUNG KNOWELL.

WELLBRED.

MASTER STEPHEN.

MASTER MATTHEW.

JUSTICE CLEMENT.

DOWNRIGHT.

CAPTAIN BOBADIL.

CASH.

FORMAL.

COB.

BRAINWORM.

MRS. KITELY.

BRIDGET.

COB'S WIFE.

PRELUDE.

Every Man in His Humor has always been considered Ben Jonson's masterpiece, and was a stage favorite from the time it was first acted, in 1598, by the Lord Chamberlain's company, until after the Restoration. Even yet it is sometimes acted as a curiosity, though much more frequently read, and is of additional interest from the fact that Shakespeare appeared in the character of Old Knowell. Jonson's plays, it may be remarked, were much preferred at the time to those of his great contemporary. The comedy was revived by Garrick in 1751, when he took the part of Kitely. This was afterward played by Kemble, who made it, as is said, "a terrific picture of jealousy working in a bosom neither refined by sentiment nor elevated by heroism."

ACT I. SCENE I.

A courtyard before Knowell's house. Enter Knowell and Brainworm.

Knowell.—A goodly day toward, and a fresh morning, Brainworm,

Call up young master. Bid him rise, sir.

Tell him I have some business to employ him.

Brainworm.—I will, sir, presently.

Kno.—But hear you, sirrah,
If he be at his book, disturb him not.

Brain.—Well, sir. (Exit into house.)

Kno.—How happy, yet, should I esteem myself,
Could I, by any practice, wean the boy
From one vain course of study he affects.
He is a scholar, if a man may trust
The liberal voice of fame in her report,
Of good account in both our universities;
Either of which hath favor'd him with graces:
But their indulgence must not spring in me
A fond opinion that he cannot err.

Enter Master Stephen.

Cousin Stephen,
What news with you, that you are here so early?

Stephen.—Nothing, but e'en come to see how you do, uncle.

Kno.—That's kindly done: you are welcome, coz.

Step.—Ay, I know that, sir; I would not ha' come else.
How doth my cousin Edward, uncle?

Kno.—Oh, well, coz, go in and see; I doubt he be scarcely stirring yet.

Step.—Uncle, afore I go in, can you tell me an' he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting? I would fain borrow it.

Kno.—Why, I hope you will not a-hawking, now, will you?

Step.—No wosse, but I'll practice against the next year, uncle. I have bought me a hawk, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.

Kno.—Oh, most ridiculous!

Step.—Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle. Why, you know, an' a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages nowadays, I'll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the Greek or the Latin. What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the citizens that come a-ducking to Islington ponds! A fine jest, i'faith! A gentleman mun show himself like a gentleman. I know what I have to do; I am no novice.

Kno.—You are a prodigal, absurd coxcomb: go to!

Nay, never look at me, it's I that speak.

Take it as you will, sir, I'll not flatter you.

Ha' you not yet found means enow to waste

That which your friends have left you, but you must

Go cast away your money on a kite;

And know not how to keep it when you've done?

Oh, it's comely! This will make you a gentleman!

Well, cousin, well! I see you are e'en past hope

Of all reclaim. Ay, so, now you're told on it,

You look another way.

Step.—What would you ha' me do?

Kno.—What would I have you do! I'll tell you, kinsman;

Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive;

That would I have thee do: and not to spend

Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,

Or every foolish brain that humors you.

Enter a servant.

Servant.—'Save you, gentlemen.

Step.—Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend;

and I assure you, mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a year, Middlesex land; he has but one son in all the world; I am his next heir at the common law, Master Stephen, as simple as I stand here, if my cousin die, as there's hope he will. I have a pretty living o' my own too, beside, hard by here.

Serv.—In good time, sir.

Step.—In good time, sir! Why? And in very good time, sir. You do not flout, friend, do you?

Serv.—Not I, sir.

Step.—Not you, sir? You were not best, sir; an' you should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly, too. And they can give it again, soundly, too, an' need be.

Serv.—Why, sir, let this satisfy you; good faith, I had no such intent.

Step.—Sir, an' I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that presently.

Serv.—Good Master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Step.—And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion, an' you were out o' my uncle's ground, I can tell you; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither in't.

Kno.—Cousin! cousin Will this ne'er be left?

Step.—Whorson base fellow! A mechanical serving man! By this cudgel, and 'twere not for shame, I would——

Kno.—What would you do, you peremptory gull?

If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.

You see the honest man demeans himself

Modestly toward you, giving no reply

To your unseason'd quarrelling.

Go, get you in; 'fore heaven, I am ashamed

Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

(Exit Stephen into house.)

Serv.—I pray you, sir, is this Master Knowell's house?

Kno.—Yes, marry, is't, sir.

Serv.—I should inquire for a gentleman here, one Master Edward Knowell; do you know any such, sir, I pray you?

Kno.—I should forget myself else, sir.

Serv.—Are you the gentleman? Cry you mercy, sir, I was required by a gentleman i' the city, as I rode out at this end of the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Kno.—To me, sir. (Reads.) "To his most selected friend, Master Edward Knowell." What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it?

Serv.—One Master Wellbred, sir.

Kno.—Master Wellbred! A young gentleman, is he not?

Serv.—The same, sir; Master Kitely married his sister: the rich merchant i' the Old Jewry.

Kno.—You say very true. Brainworm!

Enter Brainworm from house.

Brainworm.—Sir.

Kno.—Make this honest friend drink here. Pray you go in:
(Exeunt.)

This letter is directed to my son:
 Yet I am Edward Knowell too, and may,
 With the safe conscience of good manners, use
 The fellow's error to my satisfaction.
 What have we here? What's this?

(Reads.)

"Why, Ned, I beseech, hast thou forsworn all thy friends i' the Old Jewry? or dost thou think us all Jews that inhabit there? Leave thy vigilant father alone, to number over his green apricots, evening and morning, o' the northwest wall: an' I had been his son, I had saved him the labor long since; if taking in all the young wenches that pass by at the back door, and coddling every kernel of the fruit for 'em would ha' served. But pr'ythee, come over to me quickly, this morning: I have such a present for thee, our Turkey company never sent the like to the Grand Signior. One is a rhymer, sir, o' your own batch, your own leaven; but doth think himself poet major the town; willing to be shown, and worthy to be seen. The other—I will not venture his description with you till you come, because I would ha' you make hither with an appetite. If the worst of 'em be not worth your journey, draw your bill of charges, as unconscionable as any Guildhall verdict will give it you, and you shall be allowed your viaticum.

"From the Windmill."

From the burdello, it might come as well!
 The spittal! Is this the man
 My son hath sung so for the happiest wit,
 The choicest brain the times have sent us forth?
 I know not what he may be in the arts,
 Nor what in schools; but surely, for his manners,
 I judge him a profane and dissolute wretch.
 Brainworm!

Enter Brainworm from house.

Brainworm.—Sir.

Kno.—Is the fellow gone that brought this letter?

Brain.—Yes, sir, a pretty while since.

Kno.—And where's your young master?

Brain.—In his chamber, sir.

Kno.—He spake not with the fellow, did he?

Brain.—No, sir, he saw him not.

Kno.—Take you this letter, seal it, and deliver it my son;

But with no notice that I have open'd it, on your life.

Brain.—O Lord, sir, that were a jest indeed!

Kno.—I am resolved I will not stop his journey,

Nor practice any violent means to stay

The unbridled course of youth in him: for that,

Restrain'd, grows more impatient:

There is a way of winning more by love,

And urging of the modesty, than fear.

Force works on servile natures, not the free.

He that's compell'd to goodness may be good,

But 'tis but for that fit: where others, drawn

By softness and example, get a habit.

Then if they stray, but warn 'em, and, the same

They would for virtue do, they'll do for shame.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

Young Knowell's study. Enter Young Knowell and Brainworm.

Young Knowell.—Did he open it, say'st thou?

Brainworm.—Yes, o' my word, sir, and read the contents.

Y. Kno.—That's bad. What countenance, pray thee, made he i' the reading of it? Was he angry, or pleased?

Brain.—Nay, sir, I saw him not read it, nor open it, I assure your worship.

Y. Kno.—No! How know'st thou, then, that he did either?

Brain.—Marry, sir, because he charged me, on my life, to tell nobody that he opened it: which, unless he had done, he would never fear to have it revealed.

Y. Kno.—That's true: well, I thank thee, Brainworm.

(*Exit.*)

Enter Master Stephen.

Stephen.—Oh, Brainworm, didst thou not see a fellow here, in a what-sha'-call him doublet? He brought mine uncle a letter e'en now.

Brain.—Yes, Master Stephen, what of him?

Step.—Oh! I ha' such a mind to beat him.

Brain.—Faith, he is not of that mind: he is gone, Master Stephen.

Step.—Gone! which way? When went he? How long since?

Brain.—He is rid hence. He took horse at the street door.

Step.—And I stayed i' the fields! Whorson, Scanderbeg rogue! Oh that I had but a horse to fetch him back again!

Brain.—Why, you may ha' my master's gelding to save your longing, sir.

Step.—But I have no boots, that's the spite on't.

Brain.—Why, a fine wisp of hay, rolled hard, Master Stephen.

Step.—No, faith, it's no boot to follow him now; let him e'en go and hang. Pr'ythee, help to truss me a little. He does so vex me——

Brain.—You'll be worse vexed, when you are trussed, Master Stephen. Best keep unbraced, and walk yourself till you be cold; your choler may founder you else.

Step.—How dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?

Brain.—A very good leg, Master Stephen; but the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Step.—Foh, the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I'll have a pair of silk against the winter, that I go to dwell i' the town. I think my leg would show in a silk hose.

Brain.—Believe me, Master Stephen, rarely well.

Step.—In sadness, I think it would; I have a reasonable good leg.

Brain.—You have an excellent good leg, Master Stephen; but I cannot stay to praise it longer now: I am very sorry for't.

(Exit.)

Step.—Another time will serve, Brainworm.

Enter Young Knowell.

Young Knowell.—Ha! ha! ha!

Step.—I hope he laughs not at me; an' he do——

Y. Kno.—Here was a letter, indeed, to be intercepted by a man's father! He cannot but think most virtuously both of me and the sender, sure.—What! my wise cousin! Nay, then I'll furnish our feast with one gull tow'rd the mess. He writes to me of a brace, and here's one, that's three; O for a fourth!

Step.—O, now I see who he laughs at. He laughs at somebody in that letter. By this good light, an' he had laugh'd at me——

Y. Kno.—How now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?

Step.—Yes, a little. I thought you had laugh'd at me, cousin.

Y. Kno.—Why, what an' I had, coz, what would you ha' done?

Step.—By this light, I would ha' told my uncle.

Y. Kno.—Nay, if you would ha' told your uncle, I did laugh at you, coz.

Step.—Did you, indeed?

Y. Kno.—Yes, indeed.

Step.—Why, then——

Y. Kno.—What then?

Step.—I am satisfied; it is sufficient.

Y. Kno.—Why, be so, gentle coz. And I pray you let me entreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for this morning by a friend i' the Old Jewry, to come to him; will you bear me company? I protest it is not to draw you into bond, or any plot, coz.

Step.—Sir, that's all one, an' 'twere; you shall command me twice so far, to do you good in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest——

Y. Kno.—No, no; you shall not protest, coz.

Step.—By my fackins, but I will, by your leave; I'll protest more to my friend than I'll speak of at this time.

Y. Kno.—You speak very well, coz.

Step.—Nay, not so, neither; you shall pardon me; but I speak to serve my turn.

Y. Kno.—Your turn, coz! Do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort, parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk o' your turn. Come, come, wrong not the quality of your desert with looking downward, coz; but hold up your head, so; and let the idea of what you are be portray'd i' your face, that men may read i' your physiognomy: "Here, within this place, is to be seen the true and accomplished monster, or miracle of nature," which is all one. What think you of this, coz?

Step.—Why, I do think of it; and I will be more proud and melancholy, and gentlemanlike, than I have been, I'll assure you.

Y. Kno.—Why, that's resolute, Master Stephen! Now, if I can but hold him up to his height, as it is happily begun, it will do well for a suburb-humor: we may hap have a match with the city, and play him for forty pounds. Come, coz.

Step.—I will follow you.

Y. Kno.—Follow me! you must go before.

Step.—Nay, an' I must, I will. Pray you, show me, good cousin.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

The street before Cob's house. Enter Master Matthew.

Matthew.—I think this be the house. What hoa!

Enter Cob from the house.

Cob.—Who's there? O, Master Matthew! gi' your worship good morrow.

Mat.—What, Cob! How dost thou, good Cob? Dost thou inhabit here, Cob?

Cob.—Ay, sir, I and my lineage ha' kept a poor house here in our days.

Mat.—Cob, canst thou show me of a gentleman, one Captain Bobadil, where his lodging is?

Cob.—O, my guest, sir, you mean!

Mat.—Thy guest! alas! ha! ha!

Cob.—Why do you laugh, sir? Do you not mean Captain Bobadil?

Mat.—Cob, pray thee, advise thyself well; do not wrong the gentleman and thyself too. I dare be sworn he scorns thy house. He! he lodge in such a base, obscure place as thy house! Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed, if thou'dst gi' it him.

Cob.—I will not give it him, though, sir. Mass, I thought somewhat was in't we could not get him to bed all night! Well, sir, though he lie not o' my bed, he lies o' my bench. An't please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloak wrapped about him, as though he had neither won nor lost; and yet, I warrant he ne'er cast better in his life than he has done to-night.

Mat.—Why, was he drunk?

Cob.—Drunk, sir! you hear not me say so. Perhaps he swallowed a tavern-token, or some such device, sir; I have nothing to do withal. I deal with water and not with wine. Gi' me my bucket there, hoa. God b'wi' you, sir, it's six o'clock; I should ha' carried two turns by this. What hoa! my stopple! me.

Mat.—Lie in a water-bearer's house! A gentleman of his havings! Well, I'll tell him my mind.

Cob.—What, Tib, show this gentleman up to the captain. (Tib shows Master Matthew into the house.) You should ha' some now, would take this Mr. Matthew to be a gentleman, at least. His father is an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth; and now does he creep and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is. O, my guest is a fine man! he does swear the legiblest of any man christened: by St. George—the foot of Pharaoh—the body of me—as I am a gentleman and a soldier; such dainty oaths! and withal, he does this same filthy roguish tobacco, the finest and cleanliest! it would do a man good to see the fume come forth out at's tonnoles! Well, he owes me forty shillings, my wife lent him out of her purse by sixpence at a time, besides his lodging; I would I had it. I shall ha' it, he says, the next action.

Helter-skelter, hang sorrow, care'll kill a cat, up-tail all, and
a louse for the hangman.
(Exit into house.)

SCENE IV.

A room in Cob's house. Bobadil discovered upon a bench.
Enter Tib.

Bobadil.—Hostess! Hostess!

Tib.—What say you, sir?

Bob.—A cup of thy small-beer, sweet hostess.

Tib.—Sir, there's a gentleman below, would speak with
you.

Bob.—A gentleman! 'Odso, I am not within.

Tib.—My husband told him you were, sir.

Bob.—What a plague—what meant he?

Matthew.—(Within.) Captain Bobadil!

Bob.—Who's there?—Take away the basin, good hostess.
Come up, sir.

Tib.—He would desire you to come up, sir. You come
into a cleanly house here.
(Exit.)

Enter Master Matthew.

Mat.—'Save you, sir; 'save you, captain.

Bob.—Gentle Master Matthew! Is it you, sir? Please
you sit down.

Mat.—Thank you, good captain; you may see I am some-
what audacious.

Bob.—Not so, sir. I was requested to supper, last night,
by some sort of gallants, where you were wished for, and
drank to, I assure you.

Mat.—Vouchsafe me by whom, good captain.

Bob.—Marry, by young Wellbred, and others. Why,
hostess! a stool here for this gentleman.

Mat.—No haste, sir, 'tis very well.

Bob.—Body of me! It was so late ere we parted last night,
I can scarce open my eyes yet; I was but new risen, as you
came. How passes the day abroad, sir? you can tell.

Mat.—Faith, some half hour to seven. Now, trust me, you have an exceeding fine lodging here, very neat, and private!

Bob.—Ay, sir: I pray you, Master Matthew, in any case, possess no gentleman of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging.

Mat.—Who, I, sir? No.

Bob.—Not that I need to care who know it, for the cabin is convenient; but in regard I would not be too popular and generally visited, as some are.

Mat.—True, captain; I conceive you.

Bob.—For, do you see, sir, by the heart of valor in me, except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits, to whom I am extraordinarily engaged, as yourself, or so, I could not extend thus far.

Mat.—O Lord, sir! I resolve so.

(Pulls out a paper, and reads.)

Bob.—I confess, I love a cleanly and quiet privacy, above all the tumult and roar of fortune. What new piece ha' you there? Read it.

Mat.—(Reads.) "To thee, the purest object of my sense,
The most refined essence Heaven covers,
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers."

Bob.—'Tis good; proceed, proceed. Where's this?

Mat.—This, sir? a toy o' mine own, in my non-age, the infancy of my muses. But, when will you come and see my study? Good faith, I can show you some very good things I have done of late——

Bob.—What, all as good as that?

Mat.—That boot becomes your leg passing well, captain, methinks.

Bob.—So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.

Mat.—Troth, captain, and now you speak o' the fashion, Master Wellbred's elder brother and I are fallen out exceedingly; the other day I happened to enter into some discourse of a hanger, which, I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship, was most peremptory beautiful and gentlemanlike:

yet he condemn'd and cried it down for the most pried and ridiculous that ever he saw.

Bob.—'Squire Downright, the half-brother, was't not?

Mat.—Ay, sir, George Downright.

Bob.—Hang him, rook! He! Why, he has no more judgment than a malt horse. By St. George, I wonder you'd lose a thought upon such an animal! The most peremptory absurd clown of Christendom this day he is holden. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I ne'er changed words with his like. By his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay. He was born for the manger, pannier, or packsaddle! He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly; but all old iron, and rusty proverbs! A good commodity for some smith to make hobnails of.

Mat.—Ay, and he thinks to carry it away with his manhood still, where he comes. He brags he will gi' me the bastinado, as I hear.

Bob.—How! He the bastinado! How came he by that word, trow?

Mat.—Nay, indeed, he said cudgel me: I term'd it so, for my more grace.

Bob.—That may be: for I was sure it was none of his word. But when? When said he so?

Mat.—Faith, yesterday, they say: a young gallant friend of mine told me so.

Bob.—By the foot of Pharoah, an' 'twere my case, now, I should send him a challenge, presently. Come hither, you shall challenge him. I'll show you a trick or two you shall kill him with, at pleasure: the first stoccata, if you will, by this air.

Mat.—Indeed, you have absolute knowledge i' the mystery, I have heard, sir.

Bob.—Of whom? Of whom ha' you heard it, I beseech you?

Mat.—Troth, I have heard it spoken of by divers, that you have very rare and un-in-one-breath-utterable skill, sir.

Bob.—By heaven, no, not I; no skill i' the earth: some small rudiments i' the science, as to know my time, distance,

or so. I have professed it more for noblemen and gentlemen's use than mine own practice, I assure you. I'll give you a lesson. Look you, sir. Exalt not your point above this state, at any hand; so, sir, come on! Oh, twine your body more about, that you may fall to a more sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard. So, indifferent. Hollow your body more, sir, thus. Now, stand fast o' your left leg; note your distance; keep your due proportion of time—Oh, you disorder your point most irregularly! Come, put on your cloak, and we'll go to some private place, where you are acquainted—some tavern, or so—and have a bit. What money ha' you about you, Mr. Matthew?

Mat.—Faith! I ha' not past a two shillings, or so.

Bob.—'Tis somewhat with the least; but come, we will have a bunch of radishes and salt, to taste our wine; and a pipe of tobacco, to close the orifice of the stomach; and then we'll call upon young Wellbred. Perhaps we shall meet Corydon, his brother, there, and put him to the question. Come along, Mr. Matthew. (Exeunt.)

ACT II. SCENE I.

A workhouse belonging to Kitely. Enter Kitely, Cash and Downright.

Kitely.—Thomas, come hither.

There lies a note within, upon my desk;
Here, take my key—it is no matter, neither.
Where is the boy?

Cash.—Within, sir, i' the workhouse.

Kite.—Let him tell over straight that Spanish gold,
And weigh it, with the pieces of eight. Do you
See the delivery of those silver stuffs
To Master Lucar. Tell him, if he will,
He shall ha' the grograms at the rate I told him,
And I will meet him, on the Exchange, anon.

Cash.—Good, sir. (Exit.)

Kite.—Do you see that fellow, Brother Downright?

Downright.—Ay, what of him?

Kite.—

He is a jewel, brother.

I took him of a child, up at my door,
And christen'd him; gave my own name, Thomas;
Since bred him at the hospital, where, proving
A toward imp, I call'd him home, and taught him
So much, as I have made him my cashier,
And find him, in his place, so full of faith,
That I durst trust my life into his hands.

Down.—So would not I, in any bastard's, brother.

As it is like he is, although I knew
Myself his father. But you said you'd somewhat
To tell me, gentle brother. What is't? What is't?

Kite.—Faith, I am very loth to utter it,

As fearing it may hurt your patience:
But that I know your judgment is of strength,
Against the nearness of affection—

Down.—What need this circumstance? Pray you, be direct.
Come to the matter, the matter.

Kite.—Then, without further ceremony, thus

My brother Wellbred, sir, I know not how,
Of late has much declined in what he was,
And greatly alter'd in his disposition.
When he came first to lodge here in my house;
Ne'er trust me, if I were not proud of him:
But now his course is so irregular,
So loose, affected, and deprived of grace;
He makes my house, here, common as a mart,
And here, as in a tavern or a stew,
He and his wild associates spend their hours,
In repetition of lascivious jests—
Swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night
Control my servants; and, indeed, what not?

Down.—Faith, I know not what I should say to him i' the
whole world! He values me at a cracked three-farthings, for
aught I see. It will never out o' the flesh that's bred i' the
bone! I have told him enough, one would think, if that would
serve. Well, he knows what to trust to, 'fore George. Let him
spend, and spend, and domineer, till his heart ache; an' he
think to be relieved by me, when he is got into one o' your city

pounds, the counters, he has the wrong sow by the ear, i'faith, and claps his dish at a wrong man's door. I'll lay my hand on my halfpenny, ere I part with 't to fetch him out, I'll assure him.

Kite.—Nay, good brother, let it not trouble you, thus.

Down.—'Sdeath, he made me—I could eat my very spur leathers for anger! But, why are you so tame? Why do you not speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?

Kite.—Oh, there are divers reasons to dissuade, brother;
But, would yourself vouchsafe to travail in it,
Though but with plain and easy circumstance,
It would both come much better to his sense,
And favor less of stomach, or of passion.
You are his elder brother, and that title
Both gives and warrants you authority:
Whereas, if I should intimate the least,
It would but add contempt to his neglect;
He would be ready, from his heat of humor,
'To blow the ears of his familiars
With the false breath of telling what disgrace
And low disparagements I had put on him:
Whilst they, sir, to relieve him in the fable,
Make their loose comments upon ev'ry word,
Gesture, or look, I use; mock me all o'er;
Beget some slander, that shall dwell with me.
And what would that be, think you? Marry, this;
They would give out because my wife is fair,
Myself but newly married, and my sister
Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
That I were jealous! Nay, as sure as death,
That they would say. And how that I had quarrell'd
My brother purposely, thereby to find
An apt pretext to banish them my house.

Down.—Mass, perhaps so: they're like enough to do it.

Kite.—Brother, they would, believe it; so should I
But try experiments upon myself:
Lend scorn and envy opportunity
To stab my reputation and good name.

Enter Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—I will speak to him——

Bobadil.—Speak to him! Away! by the foot of Pharoah, you shall not; you shall not do him that grace.

Kite.—What is the matter, sirs?

Bob.—The time of day to you, gentleman o' the house.
Is Mr. Wellbred stirring?

Down.—How, then?—what should he do?

Bob.—Gentleman of the house, it is you:—is he within, sir?

Kite.—He came not to his lodging to-night, sir, I assure you.

Down.—Why, do you hear, you!

Bob.—The gentleman citizen hath satisfied me; I'll talk to no scavenger. (Exeunt Bobadil and Matthew.)

Down.—How, scavenger!—Stay, sir, stay!

Kite.—Nay, brother Downright——

Down.—Heart! stand you away, an' you love me.

Kite.—You shall not follow him now, I pray you, brother;—good faith, you shall not: I will overrule you.

Down.—Ha! scavenger! Well, go to, I say little; but, by this good day, (God forgive me I should swear!) if I put it up so, say I am the rankest coward ever lived. An' I swallow this, I'll ne'er draw my sword in the sight of Fleet street again, while I live; I'll sit in a barn with Madge Howlet, and catch mice first. Scavenger!

Kite.—O, do not fret yourself thus; never think on't.

Down.—These are my brother's consorts, these! these are his comrades, his walking mates! Let me not live, an' I could find in my heart to swinge the whole gang of them, one after another, and begin with him first. I am grieved it should be said he is my brother, and take these courses. Well, as he brews so he shall drink, 'fore George. Yet he shall hear on't, and that rightly, too, an' I live, i'faith.

Kite.—But, brother, let your reprehensions then

Run in an easy current, nct o'er high:

But rather use the soft persuading way,

More winning than enforcing the consent.

Down.—Ay, ay, let me alone for that, I warrant you.

(Bell rings.)

Kite.—How, now! O, the bell rings to breakfast.

Brother, I pray you, go in, and bear my wife

Company till I come; I'll but give order

For some dispatch of business to my servant.

Down.—I will—Scavenger! scavenger! (Exit Downright.)

Kite.—Well, though my troubled spirit's somewhat eased,

It's not reposed in that security

As I could wish; but I must be content,

Howe'er I set a face on't to the world!

Would I had lost this finger, at a venture,

So Wellbred had ne'er lodged within my house!

Why 't cannot be, where there is such resort

Of wanton gallants, and young revellers,

That any woman should be honest long.

Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time

Had answer'd their affections, all the world

Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold!

Marry, I hope they have not got that start;

For opportunity hath balk'd them yet,

And shall do still, while I have eyes end ears

To attend the impositions of my heart.

Enter Dame Kitely.

Dame.—Sister Bridget, pray you fetch down the rosewater
above in the closet. Sweetheart, will you come in to breakfast?

Kite.—An' she overheard me, now!

Dame.—I pray thee, good love, we stay for you.

Kite.—By heaven! I would not for a thousand angels.

Dame.—What ails you, sweetheart, are you not well,
Speak, good Muss.

Kite.—Troth, my head aches extremely, on a sudden.

Dame.—Oh, the Lord!

Kite.—How now! What!

Dame.—Alas, how it burns! Love, keep you warm: good
truth it is this new disease, there's a number are troubled
withal! For love's sake, sweetheart, come in out of the air.

Kite.—How simple, and how subtle are her answers! A new disease, and many troubled with it! Why, true! she heard me, all the world to nothing.

Dame.—I pray thee, good sweetheart, come in; the air will do you harm, in troth.

Kite.—I'll come to you presently; 'twill away, I hope.

Dame.—Pray heaven it do. (Exit Dame.)

Kite.—A new disease! I know not, new or old,
 But it may well be call'd poor mortals' plague;
 For, like a pestilence, it doth infect
 The houses of the brain,
 Till not a thought or motion in the mind
 Be free from the black poison of suspect.
 Well, I will once more strive,
 In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,
 And shake the fever off, that thus shakes me. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

Moorfields. Enter Brainworm, disguised like a soldier.

Brainworm.—Ha! I cannot choose but laugh, to see myself translated thus. Now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace; so much for my borrowed shape. Well, the truth is, my old master intends to follow my young, dry foot, over Moorfields to London this morning. Now I, knowing of this hunting match, or rather conspiracy, and to insinuate with my young master, have got me afore, in this disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscade, and intercept him in the midway. If I can but get his cloak, his purse, his hat, nay, anything to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey—*Veni, vidi, vici*, I may say with Captain Cæsar; I am made forever, i'faith. Well, now must I practice to get the true garb of one of those lance-knights, my arm here, and my—young master, and his cousin, Mr. Stephen, as I am a true counterfeit man of war, and no soldier. (Retires.)

Enter Master Stephen and Young Knowell.

Young Knowell.—So, sir, and how then, coz?

Stephen.—'Sfoot, I have lost my purse, I think.

Y. Kno.—How! lost your purse? Where? When had you it?

Step.—I cannot tell: stay.

Y. Kno.—What! ha' you it?

Step.—No, I think I was bewitched, I——

Y. Kno.—Nay, do not weep the loss: hang it, let it go.

Step.—Oh, it's here. No, an' it had been lost, I had not cared, but for a jet ring Mistress Mary sent me.

Y. Kno.—A jet ring! Oh, the posy, the posy!

Step.—Fine, i' the faith!—Though fancy sleep, my love is deep.—Meaning, that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly.

Y. Kno.—Most excellent!

Step.—And then I sent her another, and my posy was: The deeper the sweeter, I'll be judged by St. Peter.

Y. Kno.—How by St. Peter? I do not conceive that.

Step.—Marry, St. Peter to make up the metre.

Y. Kno.—Well, there the saint was your good patron: he helped you at your need: thank him, thank him.

Brain.—I cannot take leave of 'em so. Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns for a very excellent good blade, here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, that, in the better state of my fortune, scorned so mean a refuge; but now it is the humor of necessity to have it so. You seem to be gentlemen well affected to martial men, else I should rather die with silence than live with shame: however, vouchsafe to remember, it is my want speaks, not myself. This condition agrees not with my spirit.

Y. Kno.—Where hast thou served?

Brain.—May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungaria, Dalmatia, Poland; where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by sea and land, any time this fourteen years, and followed the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo; once at the relief of Vienna. I have been at Marselles, Naples and the Adriatic gulf; a gentleman slave in the galleys thrice,

where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both thighs, and yet, being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance; nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Step.—How will you sell this rapier, friend?

Brain.—Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgment; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Step.—True, I am a gentleman, I know that, friend: I pray you say, what would you ask?

Brain.—I assure you the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe.

Y. Kno.—Ay, with a velvet scabbard.

Step.—Nay, an't be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that's flat: I'd not wear it as it is, an' you would give me an angel.

Brain.—At your worship's pleasure, sir; nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo.

Step.—I had rather it were a Spaniard; but tell me, what shall I give you for it? An' it had a silver hilt—

Y. Kno.—Come, come, you shall not buy it; hold, there's a shilling: fellow, take thy rapier.

Step.—Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so, and there's another shilling, fellow; I scorn to be outbidden. What! shall I walk with a cudgel, like a higgibottom, and may have a rapier for money?

Y. Kno.—You may buy one in the city.

Step.—Tut, I'll buy this i' the field, so I will; I have a mind to 't, because it is a field rapier. Tell me your lowest price.

Y. Kno.—You shall not buy it, I say.

Step.—By this money, but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

Y. Kno.—Come away; you are a fool. (Exit.)

Step.—Friend, I am a fool, that's granted: but I'll have it, for that word's sake. Follow me for your money. He says I am a fool!

Brain.—Yes, sir; the gentleman seems to know you.

(Exeunt.)

Enter Knowell.

Knowell.—I cannot lose the thought yet of this letter
Sent to my son; nor leave to admire the change
Of manners, and the breeding of our youth
Within the kingdom, since myself was one.
When I was young, he lived not in the stews
Durst have conceived a scorn, and utter'd it,
On a gray head;
And a man had then
A certain reverence paid unto his years,
That had none due unto his life.
But now we are fallen; youth from their fear,
And age from that which bred it, good example.

Enter Brainworm.

Brainworm.—My master! Nay, faith have at you: I am
fleshed now, I have sped so well; though I must attack you in
a different way. Worshipful sir, I beseech you, respect the
state of a poor soldier! I am ashamed of this base course of
life (God's my comfort), but extremity provokes me to't: what
remedy?

Knowell.—I have not for you now.

Brain.—By the faith I bear unto truth, gentleman, it is no
ordinary custom in me, but only to preserve manhood. I pro-
test to you, a man I have been, a man I may be, by your sweet
bounty.

Kno.—Pr'ythee, good friend, be satisfied.

Brain.—Good sir, by that hand, you may do the part of a
kind gentleman, in lending a poor soldier the price of two
cans of beer, a matter of small value: the King of Heaven
shall pay you, and I shall rest thankful: sweet worship—

Kno.—Nay, an' you be so importunate—

Brain.—Oh, tender sir, need will have his course: I was
not made to this vile use! Well, the edge of the enemy could
not have bated me so much. (He weeps.) It's hard, when a
man has served his prince's cause, and be thus— Honorable
sir, let me derive a small piece of silver from you, it shall not
be given in the course of time. By this good ground, I was

fain to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper; I had suck'd the hilts long before, I am a pagan else: sweet honor.

Kno.—Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,
To think a fellow of that outward presence,
Should, in the frame and fashion of his mind,
Be so degenerate and sordid base!
Art thou not a man, and sham'st thou not to beg?
To practice such a servile kind of life?
Why, were thy education ne'er so mean,
Having thy limbs, a thousand fairer courses
Offer themselves to thy election.
Either the wars might still supply thy wants,
Or service of some virtuous gentleman.

Brain.—Faith, sir, I would gladly find some other course,
if so——

Kno.—Ay, you'd gladly find it, but you will not seek it.

Brain.—Alas! sir, where should a man seek? In the wars there's no ascent by desert in these days, but—and for service, would it were as soon purchased as wished for (the air's my comfort)! I know what I would say——

Kno.—What's thy name?

Brain.—Please you, Fitzsword, sir.

Kno.—Fitzsword.

Say that a man should entertain thee now,
Would'st thou be honest, humble, just and true?

Brain.—Sir, by the place and honor of a soldier——

Kno.—Nay, nay, I like not those affected oaths!

Speak plainly, man; what think'st thou of my words?

Brain.—Nothing, sir; but wish my fortunes were as happy as my service should be honest.

Kno.—Well, follow me; I'll prove thee, if thy deeds will carry proportion to thy words. (Exit.)

Brain.—Yes, sir, straight: I'll but garter my hose. Oh, that my belly were hooped now, for I am ready to burst with laughing! Never was bottle or bagpipe fuller. 'Slid, was there even seen a fox in years to betray himself thus? Now I shall be possessed of all his counsels, and by that conduct my young master! Well, he's resolved to prove my honesty; faith, and I

am resolved to prove his patience. Oh, I shall abuse him intolerably! This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier forever. He will never come within the sight of a red coat or a musket again. Well, I'll follow him. Oh, how long to be employed!

With change of voice, these scars, and many an oath,
I'll follow son and sire, and serve 'em both. (Exit.)

ACT III. SCENE I.

Stocks Market.

Enter Wellbred, Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—Yes, faith, sir! We were at your lodgings to seek you, too.

Wellbred.—Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bobadil.—Your brother delivered us as much.

Well.—Who? My brother Downright?

Bob.—He!—Mr. Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honor, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a——

Well.—Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bob.—I protest to you, as I have a thing to be saved about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part——

Well.—Good captain (faces about) to some other discourse.

Bob.—With your leave, sir, an' there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George.

Mat.—Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how; he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion——

Well.—Oh, Mr. Matthew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few——

Enter Young Knowell and Stephen.

Ned Knowell! By my soul, welcome! How dost thou, sweet spirit, my genius? I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better whilst I live for this, my dear fury. Now

I see there's some love in thee!—Sirrah, these be the two I writ to you of. Nay, what a drowsy humor is this now? Why dost thou not speak?

Young Knowell.—O you are a fine gallant; you sent me a rare letter.

Wellbred.—Why, was't not rare?

Y. Kno.—Yes, I'll be sworn, I was never guilty of reading the like. But I marvel what camel it was that had the carriage of it; for doubtless he was no ordinary beast that brought it.

Well.—Why?

Y. Kno.—Why, sayest thou? Why, dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning, the sober time of the day, too, could have mistaken my father for me?

Well.—'Slid, you jest, I hope.

Y. Kno.—Indeed, the best use we can turn it to is to make a jest on't now; but I'll assure you, my father had a full view o' your flourishing style, before I saw it.

Well.—What a dull slave was this! But, sirrah, what said he to it, i' faith?

Y. Kno.—Nay, I know not what he said; but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Well.—What, what?

Y. Kno.—Marry, that thou art some strange dissolute young fellow, and I not a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Well.—Tut, that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 'twill change shortly. But, sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-bys here:—thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in 'em, if thou hearest 'em once go: my wind instruments. I'll wind 'em up—— But what strange piece of silence is this? The sign of the dumb man!

Y. Kno.—Oh, sir, a kinsman of mine; one that may make your music the fuller, an' please: he has his humor, sir.

Well.—Oh, what is't, what is't?

Y. Kno.—Nay, I'll neither do your judgment, nor his folly, that wrong, as to prepare your apprehensions. I'll leave him to the mercy o' your search, if you can take him so.

Well.—Well, Captain Bobadil, Mr. Matthew, I pray you know this gentleman here: he is a friend of mine, and one that will deserve your affection. I know not your name, sir, but shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

Stephen.—My name is Mr. Stephen, sir: I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir; his father is mine uncle, sir; I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

Bob.—I must tell you this, I am no general man: but, for Mr. Wellbred's sake (you may embrace it at what height of favor you please) I do communicate with you; and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts. I love few words.

Y. Kno.—And I fewer, sir. I have scarce enow to thank you.

Mat.—But are you indeed, sir, so given to it?

(To Mr. Stephen.)

Step.—Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mat.—Oh, it's your only fine humor, sir; your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir: I am melancholy myself divers times, sir, and then do I no more but take a pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets, at a sitting.

Step.—Cousin, am I melancholy enough?

Y. Kno.—Oh, ay, excellent!

Well.—Captain Bobadil, why muse you so!

Y. Kno.—He is melancholy too.

Bob.—Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honorable piece of service was perform'd, to-morrow, being St. Mark's day, shall be some ten years now.

Y. Kno.—In what place, captain?

Bob.—Why, at the beleag'ring of Strigonium, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen as any were in Europe lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first but the best leagure that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking of——what do you call it, last year, by the Genoese; but that (of all others) was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in,

since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier.

Step.—So, I had as lief as an angel I could swear as well as that gentleman.

Y. Kno.—Then you were a servitor at both, it seems; at Strigonium, and what do you call't?

Bob.—Oh, lord, sir! by St. George, I was the first man that enter'd the breach; had I not effected it with resolution I had been slain, if I had had a million of lives.

Y. Kno.—'Twas pity you had not ten; a cat's, and your own i' faith. But, was it possible?

Bob.—I assure you, upon my reputation, 'tis true, and yourself shall confess.

Y. Kno.—You must bring me to the rack first.

Bob.—Observe me judicially, sweet sir: they had planted me three demi-culverins, just in the mouth of the breach; now, sir, as we were to give on, their master-gunner (a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think) confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire: I, spying his intendment, discharged my petriol in his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier, ran violently upon the Moors, that guarded the ordnance, and put them all pell-mell to the sword.

Well.—To the sword! to the rapier, captain!

Y. Kno.—Oh, it was a good figure observed, sir! But did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?

Bob.—Without any impeach o' the earth; you shall perceive, sir. It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on a poor gentleman's thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay, Excalibur, Durindina, or so! Tut, I lend no credit to that is fabled of 'em; I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the boldier maintain it.

Step.—I marvel whether it be a Toledo, or no.

Bob.—A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Step.—I have a countryman of his here.

Mat.—Pray you, let's see, sir. Yes, faith, it is!

Bob.—This a Toledo! pish.

Step.—Why do you pish, captain?

Bob.—A Fleming, by Heaven! I'll buy them for a gilder a piece, an' I will have a thousand of them.

Y. Kno.—How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Well.—Where bought you it, Mr. Stephen?

Step.—Of a scurvy rogue soldier; he swore it was a Toledo.

Bob.—A poor provant rapier—no better.

Mat.—Mass, I think it be, indeed, now I look on't better.

Bob.—Come along, Master Matthew.

(*Exeunt Bobadil and Matthew.*)

Y. Kno.—Nay, the longer you look on't, the worse. Put it up, put it up.

Step.—Well, I will put it up, but by—(I ha' forgot the captain's oath, I thought to have sworn by it) an' e'er I meet him—

Well.—O, 'tis past help now, sir; you must ha' patience.

Step.—Whorson coney-catching rascal! I could eat the very hilts for anger.

Y. Kno.—A sign of good digestion; you have an ostrich stomach, cousin.

Step.—A stomach! I would I had him here; you should see an' I had a stomach.

Well.—It's better as 'tis. Come, gentlemen, shall we go?

Enter Brainworm.

Y. Kno.—A miracle! cousin! look here! look here!

Step.—O, God'slid; by my leave, do you know me, sir?

Brain.—Ay, sir, I know you by sight.

Step.—You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brain.—Yes, marry, did I, sir.

Step.—You said it was a Toledo, ha?

Brain.—True, I did so.

Step.—But it is none!

Brain.—No, sir, I confess it is none.

Step.—Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confess'd it. By God's will, an' you had not confess'd it—

Y. Kno.—Oh, cousin, forbear, forbear.

Step.—Nay, I have done, cousin.

Well.—Why, you have done like a gentleman: he has confess'd it: what would you more?

Step.—Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal; under his favor, do you see?

Y. Kno.—Ay, by his leave, he is, and under favor. Pretty piece of civility? Sirrah, how dost thou like him?

Well.—Oh, it's a most precious fool—make much on him. I can compare him to nothing more happily than a drum; for every one may play upon him.

Y. Kno.—No, no; a child's whistle were far fitter.

Brain.—Sir, shall I entreat a word with you?

Y. Kno.—With me, sir! You have not another Toledo to sell, ha' you?

Brain.—You are conceited, sir; your name is Mr. Knowell, as I take it?

Y. Kno.—You are i' the right. You mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you?

Brain.—No, sir; I am none of that cost.

Y. Kno.—Of as bare coat, though! Well, say, sir?

Brain.—Faith, sir, I am but a servant to the drum extraordinary, and, indeed, this smoky varnish being washed off, and three or four patches removed, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father—Brainworm.

Y. Kno.—Brainworm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blew thee hither in this shape?

Brain.—The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning: the same that blew you to the windmill, and your father after you.

Y. Kno.—My father!

Brain.—Nay, never start; 'tis true: he has followed you over the fields, by foot, as you would do a hare i' the snow.

Y. Kno.—Sirrah, Wellbred, what shall we do, sirrah? My father is come over after me.

Well.—Thy father! Where is he?

Brain.—At Justice Clement's house, here, in Coleman street, where he but stays my return; and then—

Well.—Who is this? Brainworm?

Brain.—The same, sir.

Well.—Why, how, i' the name of wit, comest thou transmuted thus?

Brain.—Faith, a device! A device! Nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here; withdraw, and I'll tell you all.

Y. Kno.—Come, cousin.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

The Warehouse. Enter Kitely and Cash.

Kitely.—What says he, Thomas? Did you speak with him?

Cash.—He will expect you, sir within this half hour.

Kite.—Has he the money ready, can you tell?

Cash.—Yes, sir; the money was brought in last night.

Kite.—Oh, that's well; fetch me my cloak. (*Exit Cash.*)

Stay, let me see, an hour to go and come;

Ay, that will be the least; and then 'twill be

An hour before I can dispatch with him,

Or very near: well, I will say two hours.

Two hours! Ha! Things never dreamt of yet

May be contrived, ay, and effected, too,

In two hours absence. Well, I will not go.

Two hours; no fleeting opportunity,

I will not give your subtlety that scope.

Who will not judge him worthy to be robb'd,

That sets his doors wide open to a thief,

And shows the felon where his treasure lies?

Again, what earthly spirit but will attempt

To taste the fruit of beauty's golden tree,

When leaden sleep seals up the dragon's eyes?

I will not go. Business, go by for once.

No, beauty, no; you are too, too precious

To be left so without a guard.

He, that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time or place,
Compels her to be false. I will not go.

Enter Cash.

Carry in my cloak again. Yet, stay. Yet do, too.
I will defer going on all occasions.

Cash.—Sir, Snare, your scrivener, will be there with the bonds.

Kite.—That's true: fool on me! I had clean forgot it!
I must go. What's o'clock?

Cash.—Exchange time, sir.

Kite.—'Heart! then will Wellbred presently be here, too,
With one or other of his loose consorts.
I am a knave, if I know what to say,
What course to take, or which way to resolve.
My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass,
Wherein my imagination runs, like sands,
Filling up time; but then are turn'd and turn'd;
So that I know not what to stay upon,
And less to put in act. It shall be so—
Nay, I dare build upon his secrecy;
He knows not to deceive me. Thomas!

Cash.—Sir.

Kite.—Yet now, I have bethought me, too, I will not—
Thomas, is Cob within?

Cash.—I think he be, sir.

Kite.—But he'll prate, too, there's no speech of him.
No, there were no man o' the earth to Thomas,
If I durst trust him; there is all the doubt.
But should he have a chink in him, I were gone,
Lost in my fame forever; talk for th' Exchange.
The manner he hath stood with, till this present,
Doth promise no such change! What shall I fear, then?
Well, come what will, I'll tempt my fortune once.
Thomas—you may deceive me, but I hope—
Your love to me is more—

Cash.—Sir, if a servant's

Duty, with faith, may be call'd love, you are
More than in hope, you are possess'd of it.

Kite.—I thank you heartily, Thomas; gi' me your hand.
With all my heart, good Thomas. I have, Thomas,
A secret to impart to you—but,
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up.
So far I tell you, Thomas.

Cash.—Sir, for that—

Kite.—Nay, hear me out. Think, I esteem you, Thomas,
When I let you in thus to my private.
It is a thing sits nearer to my crest
Than thou'rt aware of, Thomas. If thou shouldst
Reveal it, but—

Cash.—How! I reveal it!

Kite.—Nay,
I do not think thou wouldst; but if thou shouldst,
'Twere a great weakness.

Cash.—A great treachery.
Give it no other name.

Kite.—Thou wilt not do't, then?

Cash.—Sir, if I do, mankind disclaim me ever.

Kite.—He will not swear; he has some reservation,
Some conceal'd purpose, and close meaning, sure;
Else, being urged so much, how should he choose,
But lend an oath to all this protestation?
He's no fanatic, I have heard him swear.
What should I think of it? Urge him again,
And by some other way? I will do so—
Well, Thomas, thou hast sworn not to disclose;
Yes, you did swear.

Cash.—Not yet, sir, but I will.
Please you—

Kite.—No, Thomas, I dare take thy word;
But if thou wilt swear, do, as thou think'st good;
I am resolved without it; at thy pleasure.

Cash.—By my soul's safety, then, sir, I protest
My tongue shall ne'er take knowledge of a word
Deliver'd me in nature of your trust.

Kite.—It's too much; these ceremonies need not.

I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.

Thomas, come hither—nearer; we cannot be

Too private in this business. So it is.

Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture:

I have of late, by divers observations—

But whether his oath can bind him, there it is;

Being not taken lawfully? ha—say you?

I will bethink me ere I do proceed.

Thomas, it will be now too long to stay.

I'll spy some fitter time soon, or to-morrow.

Cash.—Sir, at your pleasure.

Kite.—I will think—give me my cloak—and, Thomas,

I pray you search the books 'gainst my return,

For the receipts 'twixt me and Traps.

Cash.—I will, sir.

Kite.—And, hear you, if your mistress' brother, Wellbred,

Chance to bring hither any gentlemen,

Ere I come back, let one straight bring me word.

Cash.—Very well, sir.

Kite.—To the Exchange; do you hear?

Or here in Coleman street, to Justice Clement's.

Forget it not, nor be out of the way.

Cash.—I will not, sir.

Kite.—I pray you, have a care on't.

Or whether he come or no, if any other

Stranger, or else, fail not to send me word.

Cash.—I shall not, sir.

Kite.—Be't your special business

Now to remember it.

Cash.—Sir, I warrant you.

Kite.—But, Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas,

I told you of.

Cash.—No, sir, I do suppose it.

Kite.—Believe me, it is not.

Cash.—Sir, I do believe you.

Kite.—By Heaven, it is not! That's enough. But, Thomas,
 I would not you should utter it, do you see,
 To any creature living; yet I care not.
 Well, I must hence. Thomas, conceive thus much;
 It was a trial of you; when I meant
 So deep a secret to you, I meant not this.
 But that I have to tell you. This is nothing, this.
 But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you.
 Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here,
 No greater hell than to be slave to fear. (Exit.)

Cash.—Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here.
 Whence should this flood of passion, trow, take head?—
 But soft,
 Here is company; now must I—— (Exit.)

Enter Wellbred, Young Knowell, Brainworm, Bobadii,
 Stephen and Matthew.

Wellbred.—Beshrew me, but it was an absolute good jest,
 and exceedingly well carried.

Young Knowell.—Ay, and our ignorance maintained it as
 well, did it not?

Well.—Yes, faith! But was't possible thou shouldst not
 know him? I forgive Mr. Stephen, for he is stupidity itself.
 Why, Brainworm, who would have thought thou hadst been
 such an artificer?

Y. Kno.—An artificer! An architect! Except a man has
 studied begging all his lifetime, and been a weaver of language
 from his infancy, for the clothing of it, I never saw his rival.

Well.—Where got'st thou this coat, I marvel?

Brainworm.—Of a Houndsditch man, sir, one of the devil's
 near kinsmen, a broker.

Enter Cash.

Cash.—Francis! Martin! Ne'er a one to be found now.
 What a spite's this!

Well.—How now, Thomas, is my brotherly Kitely within?

Cash.—No, sir: my master went forth e'en now; but Master Downright is within. Cob! What, Cob! is he gone too?

Well.—Whither went your master, Thomas? canst thou tell?

Cash.—I know not; to Justice Clement's, I think, sir.—
Cob! (Exit *Cash.*)

Young Knowell.—Justice Clement's! What's he?

Well.—Why, dost thou not know him? He is a city magistrate, a justice here; an excellent good lawyer, and a great scholar; but the only mad and merry old fellow in Europe. I showed you him the other day.

Y. Kno.—Oh, is that he? I remember him now. I have heard many of his jests i' the university. They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.

Well.—Ay, or wearing his cloak on one shoulder, or serving of God. Any thing, indeed, if it come in the way of his humor.

Enter *Cash.*

Cash.—Gasper! Martin! Cob! 'Heart! where should they be, trow?

Bobadil.—Master Kately's man, pr'ythee, vouchsafe us the lighting of this match.

Cash.—Fire on your match! no time but now to vouchsafe?
Francis! Cob! (Exit.)

Bob.—Body of me! Here's the remainder of seven pound since yesterday was seven night. 'Tis your right Trinidado! Did you never take any, Master Stephen?

Stephen.—No, truly, sir; but I'll learn to take it now, since you commend it so.

Bob.—Sir, believe me, upon my relation, for what I tell you the world shall not reprove. I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself, nor a dozen gentlemen more, of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one-and-twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only: therefore it cannot be but 'tis most divine, especially near Trinidado. Your Nicotian is good, too. I do hold it, and will affirm it, before any prince

in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.

Y. Kno.—This speech would have done decently in a tobacco trader's mouth.

Enter Cash and Cob.

Cash.—At Justice Clement's he is, in the middle of Coleman street.

Cob.—O, ho!

Bob.—Where's the match I gave thee, master Kitely's man?

Cash.—Here it is, sir.

Cob.—By God's me! I marvel what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco! it's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers.

(Bobadil beats him with a cudgel; Matthew runs away; enter Brainworm.)

All.—Oh, good captain! hold, hold!

Bob.—You base scullion, you—

Cash.—Come, thou must need be talking, too; thou'rt well enough served.

Cob.—Well, it shall be a dear beating, an' I live! I will have justice for this.

Bob.—Do you prate? Do you murmur?

(Bobadil beats him off.)

Y. Kno.—Nay, good captain, will you regard the humor of a fool?

Bob.—A whorson filthy slave! a dungworm, an excrement! Body o' Cæsar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I'd have stabbed him to the earth.

Well.—Marry, the law forbid, sir.

Bob.—By Pharaoh's foot, I would have done it. (Exit.)

Step.—Oh, he swears admirably! By Pharaoh's foot—Body of Cæsar—I shall never do it, sure; upon mine honor, and by St. George; no, I ha'n't the right grace.

Well.—But, soft, where's Mr. Matthew? gone?

Brainworm.—No, sir; they went in here.

Well.—O, let's follow them: Master Matthew is gone to salute his mistress in verse. We shall have the happiness to hear some of his poetry now. He never comes unfurnished. Brainworm!

Step.—Brainworm! Where? Is this Brainworm?

Y. Kno.—Ay, cousin, no words of it, upon your gentility.

Step.—Not I, body of me! by this air, St. George, and the foot of Pharoah!

Well.—Rare! your cousin's discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.

Y. Kno.—'Tis larded with them. A kind of French dressing, if you love it. Come, let's in. Come, cousin. (Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

A hall in Justice Clement's house. Enter Kately and Cob.

Kately.—Ha! How many are there, say'st thou?

Cob.—Marry, sir, your brother, Master Wellbred—

Kite.—Tut! beside him: what strangers are there, man?

Cob.—Strangers! Let me see—one, two—mass, I know not well, there are so many.

Kite.—How, so many?

Cob.—Ay, there's some five or six of them, at the most.

Kite.—A swarm, a swarm!

Spite of the devil, how they sting my head
With forked stings, thus wide and large! But, Cob,
How long hast thou been coming hither, Cob?

Cob.—A little while, sir.

Kite.—Didst thou come running?

Cob.—No, sir.

Kite.—Nay, then I am familiar with thy haste!

Bane to my fortunes. What meant I to marry?

I, that before was rank'd in such content,

My mind at rest too, in so soft a peace,

Being free master of my own free thoughts,

And now become a slave? What, never sigh!

Be of good cheer, man, for thou art a cuckold.
 'Tis done, 'tis done! Nay, when such flowing store,
 Plenty itself falls into my wife's lap,
 The cornucopia will be mine, I know. But, Cob,
 What entertainment had they? I am sure
 My sister and my wife would bid them welcome, ha!

Cob.—Like enough, sir; yet I heard not a word of it.

Kite.—No; their lips were seal'd with kisses, and the voice,
 Drown'd in a flood of joy at their arrival,
 Had lost her motion, state, and faculty.
 Cob, which of them was't, that first kiss'd my wife?
 My sister, I should say: my wife, alas!
 I fear not her. Ha! Who was it, say'st thou?

Cob.—By my troth, sir, will you have the truth of it?

Kite.—Ay, good Cob, I pray thee, heartily.

Cob.—Then I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than
 your worship's company, if I saw any body to be kissed,
 unless they would have kissed the post in the middle of
 the warehouse; for there I left them all, at their tobacco,
 with a pox.

Kite.—How, were they not gone in, then, ere thou cam'st?

Cob.—O no, sir!

Kite.—Spite o' the devil! What do I stay here then? Cob, Cob,
 follow me. (Exeunt.)

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A room in Kitely's house. Enter Downright and Dame Kitely.

Downright.—Well, sister, I tell you true; and you'll find it
 so in the end.

Dame Kitely.—Alas, brother, what would you have me to
 do? I cannot help it. You see my brother brings them in
 here: they are his friends.

Down.—His friends! his fiends! Lord, they do nothing but
 haunt him up and down, like a sort of unlucky spirits, and
 tempt him to all manner of villainy that can be thought of.
 Well, by this light, a little thing would make me play the devil
 with some of them! And 'twere not more for your husband's

sake, than any thing else, I'd make the house too hot for the best on 'em. They should say, and swear, hell were broken loose, ere they went hence. But, by God's will, 'tis nobody's fault but yours; for an' you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboiled, and baked too, every mother's son, ere they should ha' come in, e'er a one of 'em.

Dame Kite.—God's my life! did you ever hear the like? What a strange man is this! Could I keep out all them, think you! I should put myself against half-a-dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd mad the patient'st body in the world, to hear you talk so without any sense or reason!

Enter Mrs. Bridget, Mr. Matthew, Wellbred, Stephen, Young Knowell, Bobadil and Cash.

Bridget.—Servant, in troth, you are too prodigal
Of your wit's treasure, thus to pour it forth
Upon so mean a subject as my worth.

Matthew.—You say well, mistress, and I mean as well.

Downright.—Hey day, here is stuff!

Wellbred.—O, now stand close. Pray heavens she can get him to read; he should do it of his own natural impudence.

Bridg.—Servant, what is this same, I pray you?

Mat.—Marry, an elegy! an elegy! an odd toy—I'll read it, if you please.

Bridg.—Pray you do, servant.

Down.—O, here's no foppery! Death, I can endure the stocks better.

Young Knowell.—What ails thy brother? Can he not hear the reading of a ballad?

Well.—O no, a rhyme to him is worse than cheese, or a bagpipe.—But, mark, you lose the protestation.

Bridg.—Come, servant, I pray read it.

Bobadil.—Master Matthew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress, and her fair sister. Fie, while you live, avoid this prolixity.

Mat.—I shall, sir——

(Reads.)

Rare creature, let me speak without offense,

'Would Heav'n my rude words had the influence
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,
Then should'st thou be his prisoner, who is thine.

(Master Stephen answers with shaking his head.)

Y. Kno.—'Slight, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel
an' there be any brain in it!

Well.—Sister, what ha' you here? Verses? Pray you let's
see. Who made these verses? they are excellent good.

Mat.—O, Master Wellbred, 'tis your disposition to say so,
sir; they were good i' the morning; I made them extempore
this morning.

Well.—How, extempore!

Mat.—I would I might be hang'd else; ask Captain Bobadil.
He saw me write them at the—the Star yonder.

Step.—Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?

Y. Kno.—O, admirable! the best that ever I heard, coz.

Step.—Body o' Cæsar! they are admirable! The best I
ever heard, as I am a soldier.

Down.—I am vexed; I can hold ne'er a bone of me still!—
'Heart! I think they mean to build and breed here.

Well.—Sister Kitely, I marvel you get you not a servant
that can rhyme, and do tricks too.

Down.—O, monster! Impudence itself! Tricks!—Come,
you might practice your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and not
here. This is no tavern, nor drinking school, to vent your ex-
ploits in.

Well.—How now! whose cow has calved?

Down.—Marry, that has mine, sir. Nay, boy, never look
askance at me for the matter; I'll tell you of it; ay, sir, you
and your companions; mend yourselves, when I ha' done!

Well.—My companions!

Down.—Yes, sir, your companions, so I say; I am not
afraid of you nor them neither, your hang-boys here. You
must have your poets and your potlings, your soldados and
foolados, to follow you up and down the city.—Sirrah, you
ballad singer; and, slops, you fellow there, get out; get you

home; or, by this steel, I'll cut off your ears, and that presently.

Well.—'Slight, stay, and let's see what he dare do. Cut off his ears! cut a whetstone! You are an ass, do you see; touch any man here, and by this hand, I'll run my rapier to the hilt in you.

Down.—Yea, that would I fain see, boy.

(They all draw, and they of the house make out to part them.)

Dame Kite.—Oh, Jesu! Murder! Thomas! Gasper!

Bridg.—Help, help, Thomas.

Bob.—Sirrah! You Holofernes! by my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my rapier, for this; I will by this, good heav'n. Nay, let him come, gentlemen, by the body of St. George, I'll not kill him.

(They offer to fight again, and are parted.)

Cash.—Hold, hold, good gentlemen.

Down.—You whorson, bragging coistril.

Enter Kitley.

Kitley.—Why, how now, what's the matter? What's the stir here?

Put up your weapons, and put off this rage.

My wife and sister, they're the cause of this.

What, Thomas! where is the knave?

Cash.—Here, sir.

Well.—Come, let's go; this is one of my brother's ancient humors, this. (Exit.)

Step.—I am glad nobody was hurt by his ancient humor. (Exit.)

Kite.—Why, how now, brother, who enforced this brawl?

Down.—A sort of lewd rake-hells, that care neither for God nor the devil. And they must come here to read ballads, and roguery, and trash! I'll mar the knot of 'em ere I sleep, perhaps; especially Bob there, he that's all manner of shapes; and songs and sonnets, his fellow. But I'll follow 'em.

(Exit.)

Bridg.—Brother, indeed you are too violent,
Too sudden in your humor.
There was one a civil gentleman,
And very worthily demean'd himself.

Kite.—Oh, that was some love of yours, sister.

Bridg.—A love of mine! I would it were no worse, brother!
You'd pay my portion sooner than you think for. (Exit.)

Dame Kitely.—Indeed, he seemed to be a gentleman of exceeding fair disposition, and of very excellent good parts.
What a coil and stir is here! (Exit.)

Kite.—Her love, by heav'n! my wife's minion!
Death, these phrases are intolerable!
Well, well, well, well, well!
It is too plain, too clear. Thomas, come hither.
What, are they gone?

Cash.—Ay, sir, they went in.
My mistress, and your sister—

Kite.—Are any of the gallants within?

Cash.—No, sir, they are all gone.

Kite.—Art thou sure of it?

Cash.—I can assure you, sir.

Kite.—What gentleman was it that they praised so, Thomas?

Cash.—One, they call him Master Knowell, a handsome young gentleman, sir.

Kite.—Ay, I thought so. My mind gave me as much,
I'll die, but they have hid him in the house,
Somewhere; I'll go and search. Go with me, Thomas.
Be true to me, and thou shalt find me a master.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

Moorfields.

Enter Young Knowell, Wellbred and Brainworm.

Young Knowell.—Well, Brainworm, perform this business happily, and thou makest a purchase of my love forever.

Wellbred.—I' faith, now let thy spirits use their best faculties; but at my hand, remember the message to my brother: for there's no other means to start him out of his house.

Brainworm.—I warrant you, sir, fear nothing. I have a nimble soul, has waked all forces of my phant'ys by this time, and put them in true motion. What you have possessed me withal, I'll discharge it amply, sir. Make it no question.

(Exit.)

Well.—Forth, and prosper, *Brainworm*. Faith, Ned, how dost thou approve of my abilities in this device?

Y. Kno.—Troth, well, howsoever: but it will come excellent, if it take.

Well.—Take, man! Why, it cannot choose but take, if the circumstances miscarry not. But tell me, ingenuously, dost thou affect my sister Bridget, as thou pretend'st?

Y. Kno.—Friend, am I worth belief?

Well.—Come, do not protest. In faith, she is a maid of good ornament, and much modesty; and, except I conceived very worthily of her, thou should'st not have—

Y. Kno.—Nay, that I am afraid will be a question yet, whether I shall have her or no.

Well.—'Slid, thou shalt have her; by this light thou shalt.

Y. Kno.—I do believe thou wilt omit no offered occasion to make my desires complete.

Well.—Thou shalt see and know I will not. (Exeunt.)

Enter Knowell and Formal.

Formal.—Was your man a soldier, sir?

Knowell.—Ay, a knave. I took him begging o' the way, this morning as I came over Moorfields.

Enter Brainworm.

Oh, here he is! You have made fair speed, believe me!

Where i' the name of sloth could you be thus—

Brainworm.—Marry, peace be my comfort, where I thought I should have had little comfort of your worship's service.

Knowell.—How so?

Brain.—Oh, sir! Your coming to the city, your entertainment of me, and your sending me to watch—indeed, all the circumstances either of your charge, or my employment, are as open to your son as to yourself.

Kno.—How should that be! unless that villain, Brainworm, Have told him of the letter, and discover'd

All that I strictly charged him to conceal! 'Tis so!

Brain.—I am partly o' that faith, 'tis so indeed.

Kno.—But how should he know you to be my man?

Brain.—Nay, sir, I cannot tell, unless it be by the black art.

Kno.—But where didst thou find them, Fitzword?

Brain.—You should rather ask, where they found me, sir; for I'll be sworn I was going along in the street, thinking nothing, when (of a sudden) a voice calls—Mr. Knowell's man; another cries—soldier: and thus, half a dozen of them, till they had called me within a house, where I no sooner came, but out flew all their rapiers at my bosom, with some three or fourscore oaths to accompany them, and all to tell me, I was a dead man, if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what; which, when they could not get out of me (as I protest they must have dissected me, and made an anatomy of me first, and so I told them), they locked me up in a room i' the top of a high house, whence, by great miracle, having a light heart, I slid down by a bottom of packthread into the street, and so escaped. But, sir, thus much I can assure you; for I heard it while I was locked up; there were a great many rich merchants' and brave citizens' wives with them at a feast, and your son, Mr. Edward, withdrew with one of them, and has appointed to meet her anon, at one Cob's house, a water-bearer, that dwells by the wall. Now, there your worship shall be sure to take him, for there he preys, and fall he will not.

Kno.—Nor will I fail, to break this match I doubt not.

Go thou along with Justice Clement's man,

And stay there for me. At one Cob's house, say'st thou?

Brain.—Ay, sir, there you shall have him. (Exit Knowell.)
'Slight, when he has staid there three or four hours, travelling

with the expectation of wonders, and at length be delivered of air! Oh, the sport that I should then take to look on him, if I durst! But now I mean to appear no more before him in this shape, I have another trick to act yet. Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.

Form.—Not a whit, sir.

You have been lately in the wars, sir, it seems.

Brain.—Marry have I, sir, to my loss, and expense of all, almost——

Form.—Troth, sir, I would be glad to bestow a bottle o'you, if it please you to accept it——

Brain.—Oh, sir——

Form.—But to hear the manner of your services and your devices in the wars; they say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile-End.

Brain.—Sir, at any time when it please you, I shall be ready to discourse with you all I know; and more too, somewhat.

Form.—No better time than now, sir. We'll go to the Windmill, there we shall have a cup of neat grist, as we call it. I pray you, sir, let me request you to the Windmill.

Brain.—I'll follow you, sir, and make grist o' you, if I have good luck.
(Exeunt.)

Enter Matthew, Young Knowell, Bobadil and Stephen.

Matthew.—Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him, where we were to-day, Mr. Wellbred's half-brother? I think the whole earth cannot show his parallel, by this daylight.

Young Knowell.—We are now speaking of him. Captain Bobadil tells me, he is fallen foul o' you too.

Mat.—Oh, ay, sir; he threatened me with the bastinado.

Bobadil.—Ay, but I think I taught you prevention this morning for that. You shall kill him, beyond question, if you be so generously minded.

Mat.—Indeed, it is a most excellent trick!

Bob.—Oh, you do not give spirit enough to your motion; you are too tardy, too heavy! Oh, it must be done like lightning! Hey! (He practices at a post.)—Tut, 'tis nothing an't be not done in a—punto!

Y. Kno.—Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defense here?

Bob.—I will tell you, sir. They have assaulted me some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walked alone in divers skirts of the town, where I have driven them before me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe me. Yet all this lenity will not overcome their spleen; they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill a man may spurn abroad with his foot, at pleasure. By myself I could have slain them all, but I delight not in murder. I am loth to bear any other than this bastinado for them; yet I hold it good policy not to go disarmed, for, though I be skillful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.

Y. Kno.—Ay, believe me, may you, sir; and, in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.

Bob.—Alas, no! What's a peculiar man to a nation? Not seen.

Y. Kno.—Oh, but your skill, sir!

Bob.—Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal, I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself: but were I known to his majesty, and the lords, observe me, I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of his subjects in general, but to save the one-half, nay, three parts of his yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you?

Y. Kno.—Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bob.—Why, thus, sir. I would select nineteen more to myself; gentlemen they should be, of a good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have; and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your Punto, your Reverso, your Stoccata, your Imbrocata, your Passada, your Montonto; till they could all

play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not, in their honor, refuse us! Well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand: forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this I will venture my poor gentlemanlike carcass to perform, provided there be no treason practised upon us, by fair and discreet manhood, that is, civilly by the sword.

Y. Kno.—Why, are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times?

Bob.—Tut, never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you.

Y. Kno.—I would not stand in Downright's state then, an' you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bob.—Why, sir, you mistake! If he were here now, by this welkin I would not draw my weapon on him! Let this gentleman do his mind: but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun wherever I meet him.

Mat.—Faith, and I'll have a fling at him, at my distance.

Enter Downright, walking over the stage.

Young Kno.—God's so! Look ye where he is; yonder he goes.

Downright.—What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with these bragging rascals! (Exit.)

Bob.—It's not he, is it?

Y. Kno.—Yes, faith, it is he!

Mat.—I'll be hang'd, then, if that were he.

Y. Kno.—I assure you that was he.

Step.—Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bob.—Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so: but I can hardly be induced to believe it was he yet.

Y. Kno.—That I think, sir. But, see, he is come again!

Enter Downright.

Downright.—Oh, Pharoah's foot! have I found you! Come, draw; to your tools. Draw, gipsy, or I'll thresh you.

Bob.—Gentleman of valor, I do believe in thee, hear me—
Down.—Draw your weapon, then.

Bob.—Tall man, I never thought on't till now; body of me! I had a warrant of the peace served on me even now, as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, Mr. Matthew.

(He beats him, and disarms him. Matthew runs away.)

Down.—'Sdeath, you will not draw, then?

Bob.—Hold, hold, under thy favor, forbear.

Down.—Prate again, as you like this, you whorson foist, you. You'll control the point, you! Your consort is gone; had he staid, he had shared with you, sir. (Exit Downright.)

Y. Kno.—Twenty, and kill 'em; twenty more, kill them too. Ha! ha!

Bob.—Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace, by this good day.

Y. Kno.—No, faith, it's an ill day, captain; never reckon it other: but say you were bound to the peace, the law allows you to defend yourself; that will prove but a poor excuse.

Bob.—I cannot tell, sir. I desire good construction, in fair sort. I never sustained the like disgrace, by heaven. Sure I was struck with a planet thence—

Step.—No, you were struck with a stick.

Bob.—For I had no power to touch my weapon.

Y. Kno.—Ay, like enough; I have heard many that have been beaten under a planet. Go, get you to a surgeon. 'Slid, and these be your tricks, your passados, and your montontos, I'll none of them.

Bob.—Planet-struck, certainly! (Exit.)

Y. Kno.—Oh, manners! That this age should bring forth such creatures! That nature should be at leisure to make 'em! Come, coz.

Step.—Mess, I'll have this cloak.

Y. Kno.—God's will, 'tis Downright's.

Step.—Nay, it's mine now; another might have ta'en it up as well as I. I'll swear it, so I will.

Y. Kno.—How, an' he see it? He'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Step.—Ay, but he shall not ha't; I'll say, I bought it.

Y. Kno.—Take heed you buy it not too dear, coz.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

A chamber in Kitey's house.

Enter Kitey and Cash.

Kitey.—Art thou sure, Thomas, we have pried into all and every part throughout the house? Is there no by-place, or dark corner, has escaped our searches?

Cash.—Indeed, sir, none; there's not a hole or nook unsearched by us, from the upper loft unto the cellar.

Kite.—They have conveyed him then away, or hid him in some privacy of their own— Whilst we were searching of the dark closet, by my sister's chamber, didst thou not think that thou heard'st a rustling on the other side, and a soft tread of feet?

Cash.—Upon my truth, I did not, sir; or if you did, it might be only the vermin in the wainscot; the house is old, and overrun with them.

Kite.—It is, indeed, Thomas—we should bane these rats—dost thou understand me?—we will—they shall not harbor here; I'll cleanse my house from them, if fire or poison can effect it—I will not be tormented thus—they gnaw my brain, and burrow in my heart—I cannot bear it.

Cash.—I do not understand you, sir! Pray, be composed; these starts of passion have some cause, I fear, that touches you more nearly.

Kite.—Sorely, sorely, Thomas—it cleaves too close to me—Oh, me—(sighs)—lend me thy arm—so, good Cash.

Cash.—You tremble and look pale! Let me call assistance.

Kite.—Not for ten thousand worlds. Alas! alas! 'Tis not in medicine to give me ease:—here, here it lies.

Cash.—What, sir?

Kite.—Why—nothing, nothing—I am not sick, yet more than dead; I have a burning fever in my mind, and long for that which, having, would destroy me.

Cash.—Believe me, 'tis your fancy's imposition. Shut up your generous mind from such intruders—I'll hazard all my growing favor with you; I'll stake my present, my future welfare, that some base whispering knave—nay, pardon me, sir—hath in the best and richest soil sown seeds of rank and evil nature! Oh, my master, should they take root—

(Laughing within.)

Kite.—Hark! hark! Dost thou not hear? What think'st thou now? Are they not laughing at me? They are, they are. They have deceived the wittol, and thus they triumph in their infamy. This aggravation is not to be borne. (Laughing again.) Hark, again!—Cash, do thou unseen steal in upon them, and listen to their wanton conference.

Cash.—I shall obey you, though against my will. (Exit.)

Kite.—Against his will! Ha! It must be so. He's young, and may be bribed for them—they've various means to draw the unwary in; if it be so, I'm lost, deceived, betrayed and my bosom, my full-fraught bosom, is unlocked and opened to mockery and laughter! Heaven forbid! he cannot be that viper; sting the hand that raised and cherished him! Was this stroke added, I should be cursed. But it cannot be—no—it cannot be.

Enter Cash.

Cash.—You are musing, sir.

Kite.—I ask your pardon, Cash—ask me not why—I have wronged you, and am sorry—'tis gone.

Cash.—If you suspect my faith—

Kite.—I do not—say no more—and for my sake let it die and be forgotten—Have you seen your mistress, and heard—whence was that noise?

Cash.—Your brother, Master Wellbred, is with them, and I found them throwing out their mirth on a very truly ridiculous subject: it is one Formal, as he styles himself, and

he appertains, so he phrases it, to Justice Clement, and would speak with you.

Kite.—With me? Art thou sure it is the Justice's clerk? Where is he?

Enter Brainworm, as Formal.

Who are you, friend?

Brainworm.—An appendix to Justice Clement, vulgarly called his clerk.

Kite.—What are your wants with me?

Brain.—None.

Kite.—Do you not want to speak with me?

Brain.—No, but my master does.

Kite.—What are the Justice's commands?

Brain.—He doth not command, but entreats Master Kite to be with him directly, having matters of some moment to communicate unto him.

Kite.—What can it be! Say, I'll be with him instantly, and if your legs, friend, go not faster than your tongue, I shall be there before you.

Brain.—I will. Vale.

(Exit.)

Kite.—'Tis a precious fool, indeed!—I must go forth. —But, first, come hither, Thomas—I have admitted thee into the close recesses of my heart, and showed thee all my frailties, passions, everything.—Be careful of thy promise, keep good watch. Wilt thou be true, my Thomas?

Cash.—As truth's self, sir—

But, be assured, you're heaping care and trouble
Upon a sandy base; ill-placed suspicion
Recoils upon yourself—she's chaste as comely!
Believe 't she is—let her not note your humor;
Disperse the gloom upon your brow, and be
As clear as her unsullied honor.

Kite.—I will then, Cash—thou comfort'st me—I'll drive these
Fiend-like fancies from me, and be myself again.
Think'st thou she has perceived my folly? "Twere
Happy if she had not—She has not—
They who know no evil, will suspect none.

Cash.—True, sir! Nor has your mind a blemish now.
This change has gladden'd me—Here's my mistress,
And the rest: settle your reason to accost them.

Kite.—I will, Cash, I will—— (Exit *Cash.*)

Enter *Wellbred*, *Dame Kitely* and *Bridget*.

Wellbred.—What are you plotting, brother *Kitely*,
That thus of late you muse alone, and bear
Such weighty care upon your pensive brow?
(Laughs.)

Kite.—My care is all for you, good sneering brother;
And well I wish you'd take some wholesome counsel,
And curb your headstrong humors; trust me, brother,
You were to blame to raise commotions here,
And hurt the peace and order of my house.

Well.—No harm done, brother, I warrant you.
Since there is no harm done, anger costs
A man nothing, and a brave man is never
His own man till he be angry—To keep
His valor in obscurity, is to keep himself,
As it were, in a cloakbag. What's a brave
Musician unless he play?
What's a brave man, unless he fight?

Dame Kitely.—Ay, but what harm might have come of it
brother!

Well.—What, school'd on both sides? Pr'ythee. *Bridget*, save
me from the rod and lecture.
(*Bridget* and *Wellbred* retire.)

Kite.—With what a decent modesty she rates him!
My heart's at ease, and she shall see it is—
How art thou, wife? Thou look'st both gay and comely,
In troth thou dost—I'm sent for out, my dear,
But I shall soon return—Indeed, my life,
Business, that forces me abroad, grows irksome.
I cou'd content me with less gain and 'vantage,
To have the more at home, indeed I cou'd.

Dame Kite.—Your doubts, as well as love, may breed these
thoughts.

Kite.—That jar untunes me.

(*Aside.*)

What dost thou say? Doubt thee?
I should as soon suspect myself—No, no.
My confidence is rooted in thy merit,
So fix'd and settled, that, wert thou inclined
To masks, to sports, and balls, where lusty youth
Leads up the wanton dance, and the raised pulse
Beats quicker measures, yet I could with joy,
With heart's ease and security—not but
I had rather thou shouldst prefer thy home,
And me, to toys and such like vanities.

Dame Kite.—But sure, my dear,

A wife may moderately use these pleasures,
Which numbers and the time give sanction to,
Without the smallest blemish on her name.

Kite.—And so she may—And I'll go with thee, child,

I will indeed—I'll lead thee there myself,
And be the foremost reveller.—I'll silence
The sneers of envy, stop the tongue of slander;
Nor will I more be pointed at, as one
Disturb'd with jealousy—

Dame Kite.—Why, were you ever so?

Kite.—What!—Ha! never—ha! ha! ha!

She stabs me home. (*Aside.*) Jealous of thee!
No, do not believe it—Speak low, my love,
Thy brother will overhear us. No, no, my dear
It cou'd not be, it cou'd not be—for—for—
What is the time now?—I shall be too late—
No, no, thou may'st be satisfied
There's not the smallest spark remaining—
Remaining! What do I say? There never was,
Nor can, nor never shall be—so be satisfied—
Is Cob within there? Give me a kiss,
My dear; there, there, now we are reconciled—
I'll be back immediately—Good-bye, good-bye—
Ha! ha! Jealous! I shall burst my sides with laughing
Ha! ha! Cob, where are you, Cob? Ha! ha! (*Exit.*)

Wellbred and Bridget come forward.

Well.—What have you done, to make our husband part so merry from you? He has of late been little given to laughter.

Dame Kite.—He laughed, indeed, but seemingly without mirth. His behavior is new and strange. He is much agitated, and has some whimsy in his head, that puzzles mine to read it.

Well.—'Tis jealousy, good sister, and writ so largely that the blind may read it; have you not perceived it yet?

Dame Kite.—If I have, 'tis not always prudent that my tongue should betray my eyes, so far my wisdom tends, good brother, and little more I boast.— But what makes him ever calling for Cob so? I wonder how he can employ him.

Well.—Indeed, sister, to ask how he employs Cob, is a necessary question for you, that are his wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in—but this I'll assure you. Cob's wife is an excellent procuress, sister, and oftentimes your husband haunts her house; marry, to what end, I cannot altogether accuse him. Imagine what you think convenient. But I have known fair hides have foul hearts ere now, sister.

Dame Kite.—Never said you truer than that, brother; so much I can tell you for your learning. O, ho! is this the fruit of 's jealousy? I thought some game was in the wind, he acted with so much tenderness but now; but I'll be quit with him.— Thomas! Fetch your hat, and go with me; I'll get my hood, and out the backward way. I would to fortune I could take him there. I'd return him his own, I warrant him! I'd fit him for his jealousy!
(Exit, Cash follows.)

Well.—Ha! ha! So e'en let them go; this may make sport anon—What! Brainworm?

Enter Brainworm.

Brainworm.—I saw the merchant turn the corner and come back to tell you, all goes well; wind and tide, my master.

Well.—But how got'st thou this apparel of the justice's man?

Brain.—Marry, sir, my proper fine penman would needs bestow the grist o' me at the Windmill, to hear some martial discourse, where I so marshalled him, that I made him drunk with admiration; and because too much heat was the cause of his distemper, I stripped him stark naked, as he lay along asleep, and borrowed his suit to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty armor, and an old brown bill, to watch him till my return; which shall be when I have pawned his apparel, and spent the better part of the money, perhaps.

Well.—Well, thou art a successful, merry knave, Brainworm; his absence will be subject for more mirth. I pray thee, return to thy young master, and will him to meet me and my sister Bridget at the Tower instantly; for here, tell him, the house is so stored with jealousy, there is no room for love to stand upright in. We must get our fortunes committed to some large prison, say; and than the Tower, I know no better air, nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service. Away! (Exit Brainworm.)

Bridget.—What, is this the engine that you told me of? What farther meaning have you in the plot?

Well.—That you may know, fair sister-in-law, how happy a thing it is to be fair and beautiful.

Bridg.—That touches not me, brother?

Well.—That's true; that's even the fault of it. Well, there's a dear and well respected friend of mine, sister, stands very strongly and worthily affected toward you, and hath vowed to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart, in honor of your perfections. I have already engaged my promise to bring you where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Knowell is the man, sister. There's no exception against the party; you are ripe for a husband, and a minute's loss to such an occasion is a great trespass in a wise beauty. What say you, sister? On my soul, he loves you; will you give him the meeting?

Bridg.—'Faith, I had very little confidence in my own constancy, brother, if I durst not meet a man; but this notion of yours savors of an old knight-adventurer's servant, a little too much, methinks.

Well.—What's that, sister?

Bridg.—Marry, of the go-between.

Well.—No matter if it did; I would be such a one for my friend. But see, who is returned, to hinder us.

Enter *Kitely*.

Kitely.—What villainy is this! Called out on a false message! This was some plot. I was not sent for. Bridget, where's your sister?

Bridg.—I think she be gone forth, sir.

Kite.—How! is my wife gone forth? Whither, for heaven's sake?

Bridg.—She's gone abroad with Thomas.

Kite.—Abroad with Thomas! Oh, that villain cheats me!
He hath discover'd all unto my wife;
Beast that I was to trust him. Whither, I pray
You, went she?

Bridg.—I know not, sir.

Well.—I'll tell you, brother, whither I suspect she's gone.

Kite.—Whither, good brother?

Well.—To Cob's house, I believe; but keep my counsel.

Kite.—I will, I will. To Cob's house! Does she haunt there?

She's gone on purpose now to cuckold me,
With that lewd rascal, who, to win her favor,
Hath told her all—Why wou'd you let her go?

Well.—Because she's not my wife; if she were, I'd keep her to her tether.

Kite.—So, so; now 'tis plain. I shall go mad
With my misfortunes; now they pour in torrents;
I'm bruted by my wife, betray'd by my servant;
Mock'd at by my relations, pointed at by my neighbors,
Despised by myself.—There is nothing left now
But to revenge myself first, next hang myself;
And then—all my cares will be over. (Exit.)

Bridg.—He storms most loudly; sure you have gone too far in this.

Well.—'Twill all end right, depend upon 't.—But let us lose no time; the coast is clear; away, away; the affair is worth it, and cries haste.

Bridg.—I trust me to your guidance, brother, and so fortune for us. (Exeunt.)

ACT V. SCENE I.

Stocks Market.

Enter Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—I wonder, captain, what they will say of my going away? ha!

Bobadil.—Why, what should they say, but as of a discreet gentleman; quick, wary, respectful of nature's fair lineaments, and that's all?

Mat.—Why, so! but what can they say of your beating?

Bob.—A rude part, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery used, lain on strongly, borne most patiently, and that's all. But wherefore do I wake their remembrance? I was fascinated, by Jupiter, fascinated! but I will be unwitched, and revenged by law.

Mat.—Do you hear? Is't not best to get a warrant and have him arrested, and brought before Justice Clement?

Bob.—It were not amiss; 'would we had't!

Mat.—Why, here comes his man, let's speak to him.

Bob.—Agreed. Do you speak.

Enter Brainworm, as Formal.

Mat.—'Save you, sir.

Brainworm.—With all my heart, sir.

Mat.—Sir, there is one Downright hath abused this gentleman and myself, and we determine to make ourselves amends by law; now, if you would do us the favor to procure a warrant, to bring him before your master, you shall be well considered of, I assure you, sir.

Brain.—Sir, you know my service is my living; such favors as these, gotten of my master, is his only preferment,

and therefore you must consider me, as I may make benefit of my place.

Mat.—How is that, sir?

Brain.—Faith, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account. Yet, be what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand, you shall have it; otherwise not.

Mat.—How shall we do, captain? He asks a brace of angels—you have no money?

Bob.—Not a cross, by fortune.

Mat.—Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but twopence left of my two shillings in the morning, for wine and radish. Let's find him some pawn.

Bob.—Pawn! We have none to the value of his demand.

Mat.—O, yes, I can pawn my ring here.

Bob.—And, harkye, he shall have my trusty Toledo, too; I believe I shall have no service for it to-day.

Mat.—Do you hear sir? We have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good pawns; look you, sir, I will pledge this ring, and that gentleman his Toledo, because we would have it despatched.

Brain.—I am content, sir; I will get you the warrant presently. What's his name, say you? Downright?

Mat.—Ay, ay, George Downright.

Brain.—Well, gentlemen, I'll procure you the warrant presently; but who will you have to serve it?

Mat.—That's true, captain, that must be considered.

Bob.—Body o' me, I know not! 'Tis a service of danger!

Brain.—Why, you had best get one of the varlets o' the city, a sergeant; I'll appoint you one, if you please.

Mat.—Will you, sir? Why, we can wish no better.

Bob.—We'll leave it to you, sir.

(Exeunt Bobadil and Matthew.)

Brain.—This is rare! Now will I go pawn this cloak of a justice's man's, at the broker's, for a varlet's suit, and be
fa³ varlet myself, and so get money on all sides. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

The street, before Cob's house.

Enter Knowell.

Knowell.—O, here it is; I have found it now—Hoa, who is within here? (Tib appears at the window.)

Tib.—I am within, sir; what is your pleasure?

Kno.—To know who is within besides yourself.

Tib.—Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope?

Kno.—O, fear you the constable? then I doubt not you have some guests within deserve that fear—I'll fetch him straight.

Tib.—For heaven's sake, sir——

Kno.—Go to! Come, tell me, is not young Knowell here?

Tib.—Young Knowell! I know none such, sir, o' my honesty.

Kno.—Your honesty, dame! It flies too lightly from you. There is no way but fetch the constable.

Tib.—The constable! The man is mad, I think.

Enter Cash and Dame Kitely.

Cash.—Hoa! who keeps house here?

Kno.—Oh, this is the female copesmate of my son. Now shall I meet him straight. (Aside.)

Dame Kitely.—Knock, Thomas, hard.

Cash.—Hoa! good wife.

Tib.—Why, what's the matter with you?

Dame Kite.—Why, woman, grieves it you to ope the door? Belike, you get something to keep it shut.

Tib.—What mean these questions, pray you?

Dame Kite.—So strange you make it! Is not my husband here?

Kno.—Her husband! (Aside.)

Dame Kite.—My tried and faithful husband, Master Kitely.

Tib.—I hope he needs not to be tried here.

Dame Kite.—Come hither, Cash—I see my turtle coming to his haunts: let us retire. (They retire.)

Kno.—This must be some device to mock me withal.

Soft—who is this?—Oh! 'tis my son disguised.

I'll watch him, and surprise him.

Enter Kitely, muffled in a cloak.

Kitely.—'Tis truth, I see; there she skulks.

But I will fetch her from her hold—I will—

I tremble so, I scarce have power to do the justice

Her infamy demands.

(As Kitely goes forward, Dame Kitely and Knowell lay hold of him.)

Kno.—Have I trapped you youth? You cannot 'scape me now.

Dame Kite.—O, sir! have I forestall'd your honest market?

Found your close walks! you stand amazed

Now, do you? Ah, hide, hide your face, for shame!

I' faith, I am glad I've found you out at last.

What is your jewel, trow? In: come, let's see her; fetch

Forth the wanton dame—If she be fairer,

In any honest judgment, than myself,

I'll be content with it: but she is change;

O, you traitor!

Kno.—What mean you, woman? Let go your hold.

I see the counterfeit—I am his father, and claim him as my own.

Kite.—(Discovering himself.) I am your cuckold, and claim my vengeance.

Dame Kite.—What, do you wrong me, and insult me too?

Thou faithless man!

Kite.—Out on thy more than strumpet's impudence!

Steal'st thou thus to thy haunts? and have I taken

Thy bawd and thee, and thy companion,

Close at your villany, and would'st thou 'scuse it

With this stale jest, accusing me?

O, old incontinent, dost thou not shame

To have a mind so hot; and to entice,
And feed the enticement of a wanton woman?

Dame Kite.—Out! I defy thee, thou dissembling wretch!

Kite.—Defy me, strumpet! Ask thy pander here,
Can he deny it, or that wicked elder?

Kno.—Why, hear you, sir——

Cash.—Master, 'tis in vain to reason, while these passions
blind you. I'm grieved to see you thus.

Kite.—Tut, tut, never speak, I see through every
Veil you cast upon your treachery; but I have
Done with you, and root you from my heart for ever.
For you, sir, thus I demand my honor's due;
Resolved to cool your heat, or end my shame.

(Draws.)

Kno.—What lunacy is this? Put up your sword, and un-
deceive yourself. No arm, that e'er poised weapon can affright
me. But I pity folly, nor cope with madness.

Kite.—I will have proofs—I will—so you, good wife bawd,
Cob's wife; and you, that make your husband such a monster:
and you, young pander, I'll ha' you every one before the
justice. Nay, you shall answer it; I charge you go.

(Goes into the house, and brings out Tib.)

Kno.—Marry, with all my heart, sir, I go willingly.

Kite.—Come, will you go?

Dame Kite.—Go, to thy shame, believe it.

Kite.—Though shame and sorrow both my heart betide,
Come on—I must and will be satisfied. (Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

Stocks Market.

Enter Brainworm.

Brainworm.—Well, of all my disguises yet, now am I most
like myself; being in this sergeant's gown. A man of my
present profession never counterfeits, till he lays hold upon
a debtor, and says he 'rests him; for then he brings him to

all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace, made like a young artichoke, that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I know not what danger I undergo by this exploit; 'pray heaven I come well off!

Enter Master Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—See, I think, yonder is the varlet, by his gown. 'Save you, friend: are you not here by appointment of Justice Clement's man?

Brain.—Yes, an' please you, sir, he told me two gentlemen had willed him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be served on one Downright.

Mat.—It is honestly done of you both! and see, where the party comes, you must arrest. Serve it upon him quickly, before he be aware—

Enter Stephen, in Downright's cloak.

Bobadil.—Bear back, Master Matthew.

Brain.—Master Downright, I arrest you i' the queen's name, and must carry you before a justice, by virtue of this warrant.

Stephen.—Me, friend! I am no Downright, I. I am Master Stephen; you do not well to arrest me, I am in nobody's bonds or books. A plague on you, heartily, for making me thus afraid before my time.

Brain.—Why, no, you are deceived, gentlemen.

Bob.—He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us; but, see, here he comes indeed! this is he, officer.

Enter Downright.

Downright.—Why, how now, Signor Gull! Are you turned filcher of late? Come, deliver my cloak.

Step.—Your cloak, sir! I bought it even now in open market.

Brain.—Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procured by these two gentlemen.

Down.—These gentlemen! These rascals!

Brain.—Keep the peace, I charge you.

Down.—I obey thee. What must I do, officer?

Brain.—Go before Master Justice Clement, to answer what they can object against you, sir. I will use you kindly, sir.

Mat.—Come, let's before, and make the justice, captain—
(Exit.)

Bob.—The varlet's a tall man, before heaven! (Exit.)

Down.—Gull, you'll gi' me my cloak!

Step.—Sir, I bought it, and I'll keep it.

Down.—You will?

Step.—Ay, that I will.

Down.—Officer, there's thy fee—arrest him.

Brain.—Master Stephen, I must arrest you.

Step.—Arrest me, I scorn it; there, take your nasty cloak, I'll none on't.

Down.—Nay, that shall not serve your turn, now, sir. Officer, I'll go with thee to the justice's. Bring him along.

Step.—Why, is not here your cloak? What would you have?

Down.—I'll ha' you answer it.

Brain.—Sir, I'll take your word, and this gentleman, too, for his appearance.

Down.—I'll ha' no words taken. Bring him along.

Brain.—So, so, I have made a fair mash on't!

Step.—Must I go?

Brain.—I know no remedy, Master Stephen.

Down.—Come along before me here. I do not love your hanging look behind.

Step.—Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it. Can he, fellow?

Brain.—I think not, sir. It is but a whipping matter, sure!

Step.—Why, then let him do his worst, I am resolute.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IV.

A hall in Justice Clement's house.

Enter Clement, Knowell, Kitely, Dame Kitely, Tib, Cash, Cob and servants.

Clement.—Nay, but stay, stay, give me leave. My chair, sirrah. You, master Knowell, say, you went thither to meet your son?

Knowell.—Ay, sir.

Clem.—But who directed you thither?

Kno.—That did mine own man, sir.

Clem.—Where is he?

Kno.—Nay, I know not, now; I left him with your clerk; and appointed him to stay for me.

Clem.—My clerk! about what time was this?

Kno.—Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clem.—And what time came my man with the false message to you, Master Kitely?

Kitely.—After two, sir.

Clem.—Very good: but, Mrs. Kitely, how chance it, that you were at Cob's? Ha?

Dame Kitely.—An' please you, sir, I'll tell you. My brother Wellbred told me, that Cob's house was a suspected place——

Clem.—So it appears, methinks; but on.

Dame Kite.—And that my husband used thither dally.

Clem.—No matter, so he used himself well, mistress.

Dame Kite.—True, sir; but you know what grows by such haunts, oftentimes.

Clem.—I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, Mistress Kitely. But did you find your husband there, in that case, as you suspected?

Kite.—I found her there, sir.

Clem.—Did you so? that alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there?

Kite.—Marry, that did my brother Wellbred.

Clem.—How! Wellbred first tell her, then tell you after? Where is Wellbred?

Kite.—Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clem.—Why, this is a mere trick, a device; you are gulled in this most grossly, all! Alas, poor wench! wert thou suspected for this?

Tib.—Yes, an't please you.

Clem.—I smell mischief here, plot and contrivance, Master Kitely. However, if you will step into the next room, with your wife, and think coolly of matters, you'll find some trick has been played you—I fear here have been jealousies on both parts, and the wags have been merry with you.

Kite.—I begin to feel it—I'll take your counsel.—Will you go in, dame?

Dame Kite.—I will have justice, Mr. Kitely.

(*Exeunt Kitely, Dame Kitely and Tib.*)

Clem.—You will be a woman, Mrs. Kitely, that I see.—How, now, what's the matter?

Enter William.

William.—Sir, there's a gentleman I' the court without, desires to speak with your worship.

Clem.—A gentleman! What's he?

Will.—A soldier, sir, he says.

Clem.—A soldier! My sword, quickly. A soldier speak with me! Stand by. I will end your matters anon—Let the soldier enter. Now, sir, what ha' you to say to me?

(*Exit William.*)

Enter Bobadil and Matthew.

Bobadil.—By your worship's favor—

Clem.—Nay, keep out, sir, I know not your pretence; you send me word, sir, you are a soldier? Why, sir, you shall be answered here: here be them have been among soldiers. Sir, your pleasure?

Bob.—Faith, sir, so it is; this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wronged and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow about the town here; and, for my own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humor of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace; despoiled me of mine honor, disarmed me of my weapons, and rudely laid me along in the open streets, when I not so much as once offered to resist him.

Clem.—Oh, God's precious! Is this the soldier?—Lie there, my sword, 'twill make him swoon, I fear; he is not fit to look on't, that will put up a blow!

Matthew.—An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clem.—Why, an' he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?

Enter servant.

Servant.—There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen here, one upon your worship's warrant.

Clem.—My warrant?

Serv.—Yes, sir, the officer says, procured by these two.

Clem.—Bid him come in.—Set by this picture.—What, Mr. Downright! are you brought at Mr. Freshwater's suit here?

Enter Downright, Stephen and Brainworm.

Downright.—I' faith, sir. And here's another, brought at my suit.

Clem.—What are you, sir?

Stephen.—A gentleman, sir.— Oh, uncle!

Clem.—Uncle! Who, Master Knowell?

Kno.—Ay, sir, this is a wise kinsman of mine.

Step.—God's my witness, uncle, I am wronged here, monstrously; he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir, if I did not find it in the street by chance.

Down.—Oh, did you find it, now? You said you bought it ere-while.

Step.—And you said I stole it. Nay, now my uncle is here, I'll do well enough with you.

Clem.—Well, let this breathe awhile. You that have cause to complain there, stand forth. Had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bob.—Ay, an't please your worship—

Clem.—Nay, do not speak in passion so. Where had you it?

Bob.—Of your clerk, sir.

Clem.—That's well, an' my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at them! Where is the warrant?—Officer, have you it?

Brainworm.—No, sir, your worship's man, Master Formal, bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clem.—Why, Master Downright, are you such a novice to be served, and never see the warrant!

Down.—Sir, he did not serve it on me.

Clem.—No! how then?

Down.—Marry, sir, he came to me, and said, he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so—

(Bobadil and Matthew steal off.)

Clem.—O, God's pity, was it so, sir? He must serve it. Give me a warrant, I must serve one too—you knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you must, sirrah? Away with him to the gaol. I'll teach you a trick for your must, sir.

Brain.—Good sir, I beseech you be good to me.

Clem.—Tell him, he shall to the gaol: away with him, I say.

Brain.—Ay, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for committing more than this. I will not lose by my travail any grain of my fame certain. (Throws off his disguise.)

Clem.—How is this?

Kno.—My man, Brainworm!

Step.—O yes, uncle! Brainworm has been with my cousin Edward and me, all this day.

Clem.—I told you all, there was some device.

Brain.—Nay, excellent Justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me, both with your sword and your balance.

Clem.—Body o' me, a merry knave! Give me a bowl of sack.—If he belongs to you, Master Knowell, I bespeak your patience.

Brain.—That is it I have most need of.—Sir, if you'll pardon me only, I'll glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Kno.—Sir, you know I love not to have my favors come hard from me. You have your pardon; though I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son against me.

Brain.—Yes, faith, I have, sir; though you retained me doubly this morning for yourself; first, as Brainworm, after, as Fitzsword. I was your reformed soldier. 'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Kno.—Is it possible! Or that thou shouldst disguise thyself so as I should not know thee?

Brain.—O sir! this has been the day of my metamorphosis; it is not that shape alone that I have run through to-day. I brought Master Kitley a message, too, in the form of Master Justice's man here, to draw him out of the way, as well as your worship, while Master Wellbred might make a conveyance of Mistress Bridget to my young master.

Kno.—My son is not married, I hope?

Brain.—Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pounds, which is her portion, can make them; and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding supper at the Windmill, except some friend here prevent them, and invite them home.

Clem.—Marry, that will I; I thank thee for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you and fetch them hither, upon my warrant. Neither's friends have cause to be sorry if I know the young couple aright.—But, I pray thee, what hast thou done with my man, Formal?

Brain.—Faith, sir, after some ceremony past, as making him drunk, first with story, and then with wine, but all in kindness, and stripping him to his shirt, I left him in that cool vein; departed, sold your worship's warrant to these

two, pawned his livery for that varlet's gown to serve it in, and thus have brought myself, by my activity, to your worship's consideration.

Clem.—And I will consider thee in a cup of sack. Here's to thee, which having drank off, this is my sentence—pledge me. Thou has done, or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but deserves to be pardoned for the wit of the offense. Go into the next room; let Master Kitely into this whimsical business, and if he does not forgive thee, he has less mirth in him than an honest man ought to have.

Step.—And what shall I do?

Clem.—O! I had lost a sheep, an' he had not bleated. Why, sir, you shall give Mr. Downright his cloak, and I will entreat him to take it. A trencher and a napkin you shall have in the buttery, and keep Cob and his wife company here; whom I will entreat first to be reconciled; and you to endeavor with your wit to keep them so.

Step.—I'll do my best.

Clem.—Call Master Kitely and his wife, there.

Enter Kitely and Dame Kitely.

Did I not tell you there was a plot against you?—Did I not smell it out, as a wise magistrate ought?—Have not you traced, have not you found it, eh, Master Kitely?

Kite.—I have—I confess my folly, and own I have deserved what I have suffered for it. The trial has been severe, but it is past. All I have to ask now, is, that, as my folly is cured, and my persecutors forgiven, my shame may be forgotten.

Clem.—That will depend upon yourself, Master Kitely; do not yourself create the food for mischief. And the mischievous will not prey upon you. But, come, let a general reconciliation go round, and let all discontents be laid aside. You, Mr. Downright, put off your anger: you, Master Knowell, your cares. And do you, Master Kitely, and your wife, put off your jealousies.

Kite.—Sir, thus they go from me: kiss me, my wife.

See what a drove of horns fly in the air,

Wing'd with my cleansed and my credulous breath:
Watch 'em, suspicious eyes, watch where they fall,
See, see, on heads, that think they've none at all.
O, what a plenteous world of this will come!
When air rains horns, all may be sure of some.

Soon after the appearance of *Every Man in His Humor* was presented, probably at the Globe theatre, then newly built, the elaborate comedy of *Every Man Out of His Humor*. It was afterward played at the court of Queen Elizabeth, though it does not appear to have brought any pecuniary return to the most learned of her dramatists. If the sunshine of court was golden, it was, in her reign at least, only metaphorically golden.

THE
KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE
A BURLESQUE

BY

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE PROLOGUE.

THEN A CITIZEN.

THE CITIZEN'S WIFE, AND RALPH, *her man,*
sitting below amidst the spectators.

A RICH MERCHANT.

JASPER, *his apprentice.*

MASTER HUMPHREY, *a friend to the Merchant.*

LUCE, *the Merchant's daughter.*

MISTRESS MERRY-THOUGHT, *Jasper's mother.*

MICHAEL, *a second son of Mistress Merry-thought.*

OLD MR. MERRY-THOUGHT.

A SQUIRE.

A DWARF.

A TAPSTER.

A BOY *that danceth and singeth.*

AN HOST.

A BARBER.

TWO KNIGHTS.

A CAPTAIN.

A SERGEANT.

SOLDIERS.

This is, in a sort, an English version of *Don Quixote*, as a burlesque on the affectations of chivalry. It was completed, as is said, in eight days, and was performed when the public were allowed to have seats upon the stage, which explains passages otherwise almost unintelligible. The play has all the ear-marks of Beaumont, who wrote under the influence of Ben Jonson, though doubtless Fletcher contributed some suggestions, and, it may be, a few of the scenes. "Beaumont," says an eminent critic, "was the earliest as well as the ablest disciple of the master whose mantle was afterward to be shared among the poets of a younger generation." The admirable study of the worthy citizen and his wife, who introduce to the stage and escort with their applause *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* through his adventurous career to its timely end, has all the force and fullness of Jonson's humor, with more of freshness and freedom.

Enter Prologue.

From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene.

Enter Citizen.

Citizen.—Hold your peace, good-man boy.

Prologue.—What do you mean, sir?

Cit.—That you have no good meaning: these seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play "The London Merchant." Down with your title, boy, down with your title.

Pro.—Are you a member of the noble city?

Cit.—I am.

Pro.—And a freeman?

Cit.—Yea, and a grocer.

Pro.—So, grocer, then by your sweet favor, we intend no abuse to the city.

Cit.—No, sir; yes, sir; if you were not resolved to play the jacks, what need you to study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? Why could not you be contented, as well as others, with the legend of Whittington, or the Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham? with the building of the Royal Exchange? or the story of Queen Eleanor, with the rearing of London Bridge upon woolsacks?

Pro.—You seem to be an understanding man; what would you have us do, sir?

Cit.—Why, present something notably in honor of the commons of the city.

Pro.—Why, what do you say to the Life and Death of fat Drake, or the repairing of Fleet privies?

Cit.—I do not like that; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

Pro.—Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since, our play is ready to begin now.

Cit.—'Tis all one for that, I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

Pro.—What will you have him do?

Cit.—Marry I will have him—

Wife.—Husband, husband! (Wife below.)

Ralph.—Peace, mistress. (Ralph below.)

Wife.—Hold thy peace, Ralph, I know what I do, I warrant ye. Husband, husband!

Cit.—What sayest thou, cony?

Wife.—Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband; let him kill a lion with a pestle.

Cit.—So he shall, I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

Wife.—Husband, shall I come up, husband?

Cit.—Ay, cony. Ralph, help your mistress up this way: pray, gentlemen, make her a little room; I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife; I thank you, sir, so.

Wife.—By your leave, gentlemen all, I'm something troublesome, I'm a stranger here, I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen "Jane Shore" once; and my husband hath promised me anytime this twelvemonth, to carry me to the "Bold Beauchamps," but in truth he did not; I pray you bear with me.

Cit.—Boy, let my wife and me have a couple of stools, and then begin, and let the grocer do rare things.

Pro.—But, sir, we have never a boy to play him, every one hath a part already.

Wife.—Husband, husband, for God's sake let Ralph play him; beshrew me if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

Cit.—Well remembered wife; come up Ralph; I'll tell you, gentlemen, let them but lend him a suit of reparable, and necessities, and by gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged.

Wife.—I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparable: I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true, he will act you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbors cry out on him: he will fetch you up a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as feared I warrant you, that we quake again. We fear our children with him, if they be never so unruly; do but cry "Ralph comes, Ralph comes" to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs. Hold up thy head, Ralph, show the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part, I warrant you the gentlemen will accept of it.

Cit.—Do, Ralph, do.

Ralph.—By heaven (methinks) it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the sea,

Where never fathom line touched any ground,
And pluck drowned honor from the lake of hell.

Cit.—How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you?

Wife.—Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, "Musidorus," before the wardens of our company.

Cit.—Ay, and he should have played "Jeronimo" with a shoemaker for a wager.

Pro.—He shall have a suit of apparel, if he will go in.

Cit.—In, Ralph, in, Ralph, and set out the grocers in their kind, if thou lovest me.

Wife.—I warrant our Ralph will look finely when he's dressed.

Pro.—But what will you have it called?

Cit.—"The Grocer's Honor."

Pro.—Methinks "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" were better.

Wife.—I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

Cit.—Let it be so, begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

Pro.—I pray you do.

Cit.—What stately music have you? Have you shawns?

Pro.—Shawns? No.

Cit.—No? I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must need have shawns: I'll be at the charge of them myself rather than we'll be without them.

Pro.—So you are like to be.

Cit.—Why, and so I will be; there's two shillings; let's have the waits of Southwark; they are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

Pro.—You shall have them; will you sit down, then?

Cit.—Ay, come, wife.

Wife.—Sit you, merry all gentlemen; I'm bold to sit among you for my ease.

Pro.—From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence
All private taxes, all immodest phrases,
Whatever may but show like vicious,
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things.
Thus much for that we do. But for Ralph's part you
must answer for't yourself.

Cit.—Take you no care for Ralph; he'll discharge himself,
I warrant you.

Wife.—I'faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Ralph.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Merchant and Jasper, his man.

Merchant.—Sirrah, I'll make you know you are my prentice,
And whom my charitable love redeem'd
Even from the fall of fortune; gave thee heat
And growth, to be what now thou art; new cast thee,
Adding the trust of all I have at home,
In foreign staples, or upon the sea,
To thy direction; tied the good opinions
Both of myself and friends to thy endeavors—
So fair were thy beginnings. But with these,
As I remember, you had never charge
To love your master's daughter, and even then,
When I had found a wealthy husband for her,
I take it, sir, you had not; but, however,
I'll break the neck of that commission,
And make you know you're but a merchant's factor.

Jasper.—Sir, I do lib'rally confess I'm yours,
Bound both by love and duty to your service:
In which my labor hath been all my profit.
I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted
To wear your honest gains upon my back,
Nor have I giv'n a pension to my blood,
Or lavishly in play consum'd your stock.
These, and the miseries that do attend them,

I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers
 To all my temperate actions; for your daughter,
 If there be any love to my deservings
 Borne by her virtuous self, I cannot stop it:
 Nor am I able to refrain her wishes.
 She's private to herself, and best of knowledge
 Whom she will make so happy as to sigh for.
 Besides, I cannot think you mean to match her
 Unto a fellow of so lame a presence,
 One that hath little left of nature in him.

Merch.—'Tis very well, sir, I can tell your wisdom
 How all this shall be cured.

Jasp.— Your care becomes you.

Merch.—And thus it shall be, sir; I here discharge you
 My house and service. Take your liberty,
 And when I want a son I'll send for you. (Exit.)

Jasp.—These be the fair rewards of them that love;
 Oh, you that live in freedom never prove
 The travail of a mind led by desire.

Enter Luce.

Luce.—Why, how now, friend; struck with my father's thunder?

Jasp.—Struck, and struck dead, unless the remedy
 Be full of speed and virtue; I am now,
 What I expected long, no more your father's.

Luce.—But mine.

Jasp.—But yours, and only yours I am,
 That's all I have to keep me from the statute;
 You dare be constant still?

Luce.— Oh, fear me not.
 In this I dare be better than a woman.
 Nor shall his anger nor his offers move me,
 Were they both equal to a prince's power.

Jasp.—You know my rival?

Luce.— Yes, and love him dearly,
 E'en as I love an ague, or foul weather;
 I prithee, Jasper, fear him not.

Jasp.— Oh, no;
 I do not mean to do him so much kindness.
 But to our own desires: you know the plot
 We both agreed on.

Luce.— Yes, and will perform
 My part exactly.

Jasp.— I desire no more;
 Farewell, and keep my heart, 'tis yours.

Luce.— I take it,
 He must do miracles, makes me forsake it. (Exeunt.)

Cit.—Fie upon 'em, little infidels, what a matter's here now? Well, I'll be hang'd for a half-penny if there be not some abomination knavery in this play; well, let 'em look to it, Ralph must come, and if there be any tricks a-brewing—

Wife.—Let 'em brew and bake too, husband, a God's name. Ralph will find all out, I warrant you, and they were older than they are. I pray, my pretty youth, is Ralph ready?

Boy.—He will be presently.

Wife.—Now I pray you make my commendations unto him, and withal, carry him this stick of licorice; tell him his mistress sent it him, and bid him bite a piece, 'twill open his pipes the better, say.

Enter Merchant and Master Humphrey.

Merchant.—Come, sir, she's yours, upon my faith she's yours,
 You have my hand; for other idle lets,
 Between your hopes and her, thus with a wind
 They're scattered, and no more. My wanton prentice,
 That like a bladder blew himself with love,
 I have let out, and sent him to discover
 New masters yet unknown.

Humphrey.— I thank you, sir,
 Indeed I thank you, sir; and ere I stir,
 It shall be known, however you do deem,
 I am of gentle blood and gentle seem.

Merch.—Oh, sir, I know it certain.

Hum.— Sir, my friend,
 Although, as writers say, all things have end,

And that we call a pudding, hath his two,
 Oh, let it not seem strange, I pray, to you,
 If in this bloody simile I put
 My love, more endless than frail things or gut.

Wife.—Husband, I prithee, sweet lamb, tell me one thing,
 but tell me truly. Stay, youths, I beseech you, till I question
 my husband.

Cit.—What is it, mouse?

Wife.—Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? how it
 behaves itself, I warrant you: and speaks and looks, and perts
 up the head? I pray you, brother, with your favor, were you
 never one of Mr. Muncaster's scholars?

Cit.—Chicken, I prithee heartily contain thyself; the chil-
 der are pretty childer, but when Ralph comes, lamb!

Wife.—Ay, when Ralph comes, cony! Well, my youth, you
 may proceed.

Merch.—Well, sir, you know my love, and rest, I hope,
 Assured of my consent; get but my daughter's,
 And wed her when you please; you must be bold,
 And clap in close unto her; come, I know
 You've language good enough to win a wench.

Wife.—A toity tyrant, hath been an old stringer in his
 days, I warrant him.

Hum.—I take your gentle offer, and withal
 Yield love again for love reciprocal.

Merch.—What, Luce, within there?

Enter Luce.

Luce.— Called you, sir?

Merch.— I did;

Give entertainment to this gentleman;
 And see you be not froward: to her, sir,
 My presence will but be an eyesore to you. (Exit.)

Hum.—Fair Mistress Luce, how do you; are you well?
 Give me your hand, and then I pray you tell,
 How doth your little sister, and your brother,
 And whether you love me or any other?

Luce.—Sir, these are quickly answered.

Hum.— So they are,
Where women are not cruel; but how far
Is it now distant from the place we are in,
Unto that blessed place, your father's warren.

Luce.—What makes you think of that, sir?

Hum.— E'en that face,
For stealing rabbits whilome in that place,
God Cupid, or the keeper, I know not whether,
Unto my cost and charges brought you thither,
And there began—

Luce.—Your game, sir.

Hum.— Let no game,
Or anything that tendeth to the same,
Be evermore remembered, thou fair killer,
For whom I sate me down and brake my tiller.

Wife.—There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you. When will you do as much for me, George?

Luce.—Beshrew me, sir, I'm sorry for your losses,
But, as the proverb says, I cannot cry;
I would you had not seen me.

Hum.— So would I,
Unless you had more maw to do me good.

Luce.—Why cannot this strange passion be withstood?
Send for a constable, and raise the town.

Hum.—Oh, no; my valiant love will batter down
Millions of constables, and put to flight
E'en that great watch of Midsummer Day at night.

Luce.—Beshrew me, sir, 'twere good I yielded, then;
Weak women cannot hope, where valiant men
Have no resistance.

Hum.— Yield then; I am full
Of pity, though I say it, and can pull
Out of my pocket thus a pair of gloves.
Look, Luce, look, the dog's tooth, nor the doves
Are not so white as these; and sweet they be,
And whipt about with silk, as you may see.
If you desire the price, shoot from your eye

A beam to this place, and you shall espy
F. S., which is to say, my sweetest honey,
They cost me three-and-twopence, and no money.

Luce.—Well, sir, I take them kindly, and I thank you; what,
What would you more?

Hum.— Nothing.

Luce.— Why, then, farewell.

Hum.—Nor so, nor so, for, lady, I must tell,
Before we part, for what we met together,
God grant me time, and patience, and fair weather.

Luce.—Speak and declare your mind in terms so brief.

Hum.—I shall; then first and foremost, for relief
I call to you, if that you can afford it,
I care not at what price, for on my word it
Shall be repaid again, although it cost me
More than I'll speak of now, for love hath tossed me
In furious blanket like a tennis-ball,
And now I rise aloft, and now I fall.

Luce.—Alas, good gentleman, alas the day!

Hum.—I thank you heartily, and as I say,
Thus do I still continue without rest,
I' th' morning like a man, at night a beast,
Roaring and bellowing mine own disquiet,
That much I fear, forsaking of my diet,
Will bring me presently to that quandary,
I shall bid all adieu.

Luce.— Now, by St. Mary,
That were great pity.

Hum.— So it were, beshrew me.
Then ease me, lusty Luce, and pity show me.

Luce.—Why, sir, you know my will is nothing worth
Without my father's grant; get his consent,
And then you may with full assurance try me.

Hum.—The worshipful your sire will not deny me,
For I have ask'd him, and he hath replied,
Sweet Master Humphrey, Luce shall be thy bride.

Luce.—Sweet Master Humphrey, then I am content.

Hum.—And so am I, in truth.

Luce.— Yet take me with you.
 There is another clause must be annexed,
 And this it is I swore, and will perform it,
 No man shall ever joy me as his wife,
 But he that stole me hence. If you dare venture,
 I'm yours; you need not fear, my father loves you;
 If not, farewell forever.

Hum.— Stay, nymph, stay!
 I have a double gelding, color'd bay,
 Sprung by his father from Barbarian kind,
 Another for myself, though somewhat blind,
 Yet true as trusty tree.

Luce.— I'm satisfied,
 And so I give my hand; our course must lie
 Through Waltham Forest, where I have a friend
 Will entertain us; so farewell, Sir Humphrey,
 And think upon your business. (Exit Luce.)

Hum.— Though I die,
 I am resolv'd to venture life and limb
 For one so young, so fair, so kind, so trim.
 (Exit Humphrey.)

Wife.—By my faith and troth, George, and as I am virtuous, it is e'en the kindest young man that ever trod on shoe-leather; well, go thy ways, if thou hast her not, 'tis not thy fault, i'faith.

Cit.—I prithee, mouse, be patient; a shall have her, or I'll make some of 'em smoke for't.

Wife.—That's my good lamb, George; fie, this stinking tobacco kills me; would there were none in England. Now I pray, gentlemen, what good does this stinking tobacco do you? Nothing; I warrant you make chimneys o' your faces. Oh, husband, husband, now, now there's Ralph, there's Ralph!

Enter Ralph, like a grocer in his shop, with two prentices,
 reading "Palmerin of England."

Cit.—Peace, fool, let Ralph alone; hark you, Ralph, do not strain yourself too much at the first. Peace, begin, Ralph.

Ralph.—Then Palmerin and Trineus, snatching their lances from their dwarfs, and clasping their helmets, galloped amain after the giant, and Palmerin having gotten a sight of him, came posting amain, saying, "Stay, traitorous thief, for thou mayst not so carry away her that is worth the greatest lord in the world;" and, with these words, gave him a blow 'on the shoulder, that he struck him beside his elephant; and Trineus coming to the knight that had Agricola behind him, set him soon beside his horse, with his neck broken in the fall, so that the princess, getting out of the throng, between joy and grief said, "All happy knight, the mirror of all such as follow arms, now may I be well assured of the love thou bearest me." I wonder why the kings do not raise an army of fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand men, as big as the army that the Prince of Portigo brought against Rosicler, and destroy these giants; they do much hurt to wandering damsels that go in quest of their knights.

Wife.—Faith, husband, and Ralph says true, for they say the King of Portugal cannot sit at his meat but the giants and the ettins will come and snatch it from him.

Cit.—Hold thy tongue; on, Ralph.

Ralph.—And certainly those knights are much to be commended who, neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf through the deserts to relieve poor ladies.

Wife.—Ay, by my faith are they, Ralph, let 'em say what they will, they are indeed; our knights neglect their possessions well enough, but they do not the rest.

Ralph.—There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age; they will call one the son of a sea-cook that Palmerin of England would have called fair sir; and one that Rosicler would have called right beautiful damsel they will call old witch.

Wife.—I'll be sworn will they, Ralph; they have called me so an hundred times about a scurvy pipe of tobacco.

Ralph.—But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop, with a flapet of wood, and a blue apron before him, selling Methridatam and Dragons' Water to visited houses, that might pursue feats of arms, and through his noble achieve-

ments procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

Cit.—Well said, Ralph; some more of those words, Ralph.

Wife.—They go finely, by my troth.

Ralph.—Why should I not, then, pursue this course, both for the credit of myself and our company? For among all the worthy books of achievements, I do not call to mind that I yet read of a grocer errant: I will be the said knight. Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice Tim shall be my trusty squire, and little George my dwarf. Hence, my blue apron! Yet, in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall be portrayed a burning pestle, and I will be called the Knight of the Burning Pestle.

Wife.—Nay, I dare swear thou wilt not forget thy old trade; thou wert ever meek. Ralph! Tim!

Tim.—Anon.

Ralph.—My beloved squire, and George, my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name but the Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle; and that you never call any female by the name of a woman or wench, but fair lady, if she have her desires; if not, distressed damsel; that you call all forests and heaths, deserts; and all horses, palfreys.

Wife.—This is very fine: faith, do the gentlemen like Ralph, think you, husband?

Cit.—Ay, I warrant thee, the players would give all the shoes in their shop for him.

Ralph.—My beloved Squire Tim, stand out. Admit this were a desert, and over it a knight-errant pricking, and I should bid you inquire of his intents, what would you say?

Tim.—Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding?

Ralph.—No, thus: Fair sir, the Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle commanded me to inquire upon what adventure you are bound, whether to relieve some distressed damsel or otherwise.

Cit.—Dunder blockhead cannot remember.

Wife.—I'faith, and Ralph told him on't before; all the gentlemen heard him; did he not, gentlemen, did not Ralph tell him on't?

George.—Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, here is a distressed damsel to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper.

Wife.—That's a good boy, see, the little boy can hit it; by my troth it's a fine child.

Ralph.—Relieve her with all courteous language; now shut up shop: no more my prentice, but my trusty squire and dwarf, I must bespeak my shield and arming pestle.

Cit.—Go thy ways, Ralph, as I am a true man, thou art the best on 'em all.

Wife.—Ralph! Ralph!

Ralph.—What say you, mistress?

Wife.—I prithee come again quickly, sweet Ralph.

Ralph.—By and by. (Exit Ralph.)

Enter Jasper and his mother, Mistress Merry-thought.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Give thee my blessing? No, I'll never give thee my blessing, I'll see thee hang'd first; it shall ne'er be said I gave thee my blessing. Thou art thy father's own son, of the blood of the Merry-thoughts; I may curse the time that e'er I knew thy father; he hath spent all his own, and mine too, and when I tell him of it, he laughs and dances and sings, and cries "A merry heart lives long-a." And thou art a wast-thrift, and art run away from thy master, that lov'd thee well, and art come to me, and I have laid up a little for my younger son Michael, and thou thinkest to bezle that, but thou shalt never be able to do it. Come hither, Michael, come, Michael, down on thy knees, thou shalt have my blessing.

Enter Michael.

Michael.—I pray you, mother, pray to God to bless me.

Mist. Mer.—God bless thee; but Jasper shall never have my blessing; he shall be hang'd first, shall he not, Michael? How sayest thou?

Mich.—Yes, forsooth, mother, and grace of God.

Mist. Mer.—That's a good boy.

Wife.—I'faith, it's a fine-spoken child.

Jasper.—Mother, though you forget a parent's love,

I must preserve the duty of a child.

I ran not from my master, nor return

To have your stock maintain my idleness.

Wife.—Ungracious child I warrant him; hark how he chops logic with his mother; thou hadst best tell her she lies, do, tell her she lies.

Cit.—If he were my son, I would hang him up by the heels, and flea him, and salt him, humpty halter-sack.

Jasp.—My coming only is to beg your love,

Which I must ever, though I never gain it;

And howsoever you esteem of me,

There is no drop of blood hid in these veins,

But I remember well belongs to you,

That brought me forth, and would be glad for you

To rip them all again, and let it out.

Mist. Mer.—I'faith I had sorrow enough for thee, God knows; but I'll hamper thee well enough: get thee in, thou vagabond, get thee in, and learn of thy brother Michael.

Old Merry-thought.—(Within.) "Nose, nose, jolly red nose, And who gave thee this jolly red nose?"

Mist. Mer.—Hark, my husband he's singing and holting,

And I'm fain to cark and care, and all little enough.

Husband, Charles, Charles Merry-thought!

Enter Old Merry-thought.

Old Mer.—"Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves, And they gave me this jolly red nose."

Mist. Mer.—If you would consider your estate, you would have little list to sing, I wis.

Old Mer.—It should never be considered, while it were an estate, if I thought it would spoil my singing.

Mist. Mer.—But how wilt thou do, Charles? Thou art an old man, and thou canst not work, and thou hast not forty

shillings left, and thou eatest good meat, and drinkest good drink, and laughest?

Old Mer.—And will do.

Mist. Mer.—But how wilt thou come by it, Charles?

Old Mer.—How? Why, how have I done hitherto these forty years? I never came into my dining-room, but at eleven and six o'clock I found excellent meat and drink o' th' table. My clothes were never worn out, but the next morning a tailor brought me a new suit, and without question it will be so ever! Use makes perfectness; if all should fail, it is but a little straining myself extraordinary, and laugh myself to death.

Wife.—It's a foolish old man, this: is not he, George?

Cit.—Yes, honey.

Wife.—Give me a penny i' th' purse while I live, George.

Cit.—Ay, by'r lady, honey, hold thee there.

Mist. Mer.—Well, Charles, you promised to provide for Jasper, and I have laid up for Michael. I pray you pay Jasper his portion; he's come home, and he shall not consume Michael's stock; he says his master turned him away, but I promise you truly, I think he ran away.

Wife.—No, indeed, Mistress Merry-thought, though he be a notable gallows, yet I'll assure you his master did turn him away, even in this place, 'twas i'faith within this half hour about his daughter; my husband was by.

Cit.—Hang him, rogue, he served him well enough: love his master's daughter! By my troth, honey, if there were a thousand boys, thou wouldst spoil them all, with taking their parts; let his mother alone with him.

Wife.—Ay, George, but yet truth is truth.

Old Mer.—Where is Jasper? He's welcome, however, call him in, he shall have his portion; is he merry?

Mist. Mer.—Ay, foul chive him, he is too merry. Jasper! Michael!

Enter Jasper and Michael.

Old Mer.—Welcome, Jasper, though thou runn'st away, welcome! God bless thee! It is thy mother's mind thou shouldst receive thy portion; thou hast been abroad, and I

hope hast learned experience enough to govern it. Thou art of sufficient years. Hold thy hand: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, there is ten shillings for thee; thrust thyself into the world with that, and take some settled course. If fortune cross thee, thou hast a retiring place; come home to me, I have twenty shillings left. Be a good husband—that is, wear ordinary clothes, eat the best meat, and drink the best drink; be merry, and give to the poor, and believe me, thou hast no end of thy goods.

Jasper.—Long may you live free from all thought of ill,
And long have cause to be thus merry still.
But, father——

Old Mer.—No more words, Jasper; get thee gone, thou hast my blessing, thy father's spirit upon thee. Farewell, Jasper.

“But yet, or e'er you part (oh, cruel),
Kiss me, kiss me, sweeting,
Mine own dear jewel.”

So, now begone; no words. (Exit Jasper.)

Mist. Mer.—So, Michael, now get thee gone, too.

Michael.—Yes, forsooth, mother, but I'll have my father's blessing first.

Mist. Mer.—No, Michael, 'tis no matter for his blessing; thou hast my blessing. Begone; I'll fetch my money and jewels and follow thee: I'll stay no longer with him, I warrant thee. Truly, Charles, I'll be gone, too.

Old Mer.—What? You will not.

Mist. Mer.—Yes, indeed, will I.

Old Mer.—“Heyho, farewell, Nan,

I'll never trust wench more again, if I can.”

Mist. Mer.—You shall not think, when all your own is gone, to spend that I have been scraping up for Michael.

Old Mer.—Farewell, good wife, I expect it not; all I have to do in this world is to be merry; which I shall, if the ground be not taken from me; and if it be,

“When earth and seas from me are reft,
The skies aloft for me are left.” (Exeunt.)

(Boy dances. Music.)

Wife.—I'll be sworn he's a merry old gentleman for all that. Hark, hark, husband, hark, fiddles, fiddles; now surely they go finely. They say 'tis present death for these fiddlers to tune their rebecks before the great Turk's grace, is't not, George? But look, look, here's a youth dances; now, good youth, do a turn o' the toe. Sweetheart, i'faith, I'll have Ralph come and do some of his gambols: he'll ride the wild mare, gentlemen, 'twould do your hearts good to see him: I thank you, kind youth, pray bid Ralph come.

Cit.—Peace, conie. Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the players send Ralph, or an' they do not, I'll tear some of their periwigs beside their heads; this is all riff-raff.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Merchant and Humphrey.

Merchant.—And how, faith, how goes it now, son Humphrey?

Humphrey.—Right worshipful and my beloved friend,
And father dear, this matter's at an end.

Merch.—'Tis well, it should be so, I'm glad the girl
Is found so tractable.

Hum.— Nay, she must whirl
From hence (and you must wink: for so I say,
The story tells), to-morrow before day.

Wife.—George, dost thou think in thy conscience now 'twill be a match? Tell me but what thou thinkest, sweet rogue; thou see'st a poor gentleman (dear heart) how it labors and throbs; I warrant you, to be at rest: I'll go move the father for't.

Cit.—No, no, I prithee sit still, honeysuckle, thou'lt spoil all; if he deny him, I'll bring half a dozen good fellows myself, and in the shutting of an evening knock it up, and there's an end.

Wife.—I'll buss thee for that, i'faith, boy; well, George, well, you have been a wag in your days, I warrant you; but God forgive you, and I do with all my heart.

Merch.—How was it, son? You told me that to-morrow before daybreak, you must convey her hence.

Hum.—I must, I must, and thus it is agreed,
Your daughter rides upon a brown bay steed,
I on a sorrel, which I bought of Brian,
The honest host of the Red Roaring Lion,
In Waltham situate: then, if you may,
Consent in seemly sort, lest by delay,
The fatal sisters come, and do the office,
And then you'll sing another song.

Merch.— Alas!

Why should you be thus full of grief to me,
That do as willing as yourself agree
To anything, so it be good and fair?
Then steal her when you will, if such a pleasure
Content you both; I'll sleep and never see it,
To make your joys more full: but tell me why
You may not here perform your marriage?

Wife.—God's blessing o' thy soul, old man, i'faith thou art loth to part true hearts: I see a has her, George, and I'm glad on't; well, go thy ways, Humphrey, for a fair-spoken man. I believe thou hast not a fellow within the walls of London; an' I should say the suburbs too, I should not lie. Why dost not thou rejoice with me, George?

Cit.—If I could but see Ralph again, I were as merry as mine host, i'faith.

Hum.—The cause you seem to ask, I thus declare;
Help me, O muses nine: your daughter sware
A foolish oath, the more it was the pity:
Yet no one but myself within this city
Shall dare to say so, but a bold defiance
Shall meet him, were he of the noble science.
And yet she sware, and yet why did she swear?
Truly I cannot tell, unless it were
For her own ease; for sure sometimes an oath,
Being sworn thereafter, is like cordial broth:
And this it was she swore, never to marry,
But such a one whose mighty arm could carry
(As meaning me, for I am such a one)
Her bodily away through stick and stone,
Till both of us arrive, at her request,
Some ten miles off in the wide Waltham Forest.

Merch.—If this be all, you shall not need to fear
Any denial in your love; proceed,
I'll neither follow nor repent the deed.

Hum.—Good-night, twenty good-nights, and twenty more,
And twenty more good-nights: that makes threescore.
(*Exeunt.*)

Enter Mistress Merry-thought and her son Michael.

Mist. Mer.—Come, Michael, art thou not weary, boy?

Michael.—No, forsooth, mother, not I.

Mist. Mer.—Where be we now, child?

Mich.—Indeed, forsooth, mother, I cannot tell, unless we be
at Mile End. Is not all the world Mile End, mother?

Mist. Mer.—No, Michael, not all the world, boy; but I can
assure thee, Michael, Mile End is a goodly matter. There has
been a pitched field, my child, between the naughty Spaniels
and the Englishmen; and the Spaniels ran away, Michael, and
the Englishmen followed. My neighbor Coxstone was there,
boy, and killed them all with a birding-piece.

Mich.—Mother, forsooth.

Mist. Mer.—What says my white boy?

Mich.—Shall not my father go with us, too?

Mist. Mer.—No, Michael, let thy father go snick-up; he
shall never come between a pair of sheets with me again while
he lives: let him stay at home and sing for his supper, boy.
Come, child, sit down, and I'll show my boy fine knacks in-
deed; look here, Michael, here's a ring, and here's a brooch,
and here's a bracelet, and here's two rings more, and here's
money, and gold by th' eye, my boy.

Mich.—Shall I have all this, mother?

Mist. Mer.—Ay, Michael, thou shalt have all, Michael.

Cit.—How lik'st thou this, wench?

Wife.—I cannot tell, I would have Ralph, George; I'll see
no more else, indeed, la: and I pray you let the youths under-
stand so much by word of mouth, for I will tell you truly, I'm
afraid o' my boy. Come, come, George, let's be merry and wise;
the child's a fatherless child, and say they should put him into

a strait pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass, he would never grow after it.

Enter Ralph, Squire and Dwarf.

Cit.—Here's Ralph, here's Ralph.

Wife.—How do you, Ralph? You are welcome, Ralph, as I may say, it's a good boy, hold up thy head, and be not afraid, we are thy friends, Ralph. The gentlemen will praise thee, Ralph, if thou play'st thy part with audacity; begin, Ralph, a God's name.

Ralph.—My trusty squire, unlace my helm, give me my hat; where are we, or what desert might this be?

Dwarf.—Mirror of knighthood, this is, as I take it, the perilous Waltham down, in whose bottom stands the enchanted valley.

Mist. Mer.—Oh, Michael, we are betrayed, we are betrayed; here be giants; fly, boy; fly, boy; fly!

(Exeunt Mother and Michael.)

Ralph.—Lace on my helm again; what noise is this?

A gentle lady flying the embrace
Of some uncourteous knight; I will relieve her.
Go, squire, and say, the knight that wears this pestle
In honor of all ladies, swears revenge
Upon that recreant coward that pursues her;
Go, comfort her, and that same gentle squire
That bears her company.

Squire.—

I go, brave knight.

Ralph. My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield,
And hold it while I swear, first by my knighthood,
Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul,
My famous ancestor, then by my sword,
The beauteous Brionella girt about me,
By this bright burning pestle, of mine honor
The living trophy, and by all respect
Due to distressed damsels, here I vow
Never to end the quest of this fair lady,
And that forsaken squire, till by my valor
I gain their liberty.

Dwarf.—

Heaven bless the knight

That thus relieves poor errant gentlewomen. (Exit.)

Wife.—Ay, marry, Ralph, this has some savor in it; I would see the proudest of them all offer to carry his books after him. But, George, I will not have him go away so soon, I shall be sick if he go away, that I shall; call Ralph again, George, call Ralph again: I prithee, sweetheart, let him come fight before me, and let's have some drums and trumpets, and let him kill all that comes near him, an' thou lov'st me, George.

Cit.—Peace, a little, bird; he shall kill them all, an' they were twenty more on 'em than there are.

Enter Jasper.

Jasper.—Now, Fortune (if thou be'st not only ill),
Show me thy better face, and bring about
Thy desperate wheel, that I may climb at length
And stand; this is our place of meeting,
Iw love have any constancy. Oh, age
Where only wealthy men are counted happy:
How shall I please thee? how deserve thy smiles,
When I am only rich in misery?
My father's blessing, and this little coin
Is my inheritance. A strong revenue!
From earth thou art, and unto earth I give thee.
There grow and multiply, whilst fresher air
Breeds me a fresher fortune. How, illusion

(Spies the casket.)

What, hath the devil coined himself before me?
'Tis metal good, it rings well, I am waking,
And taking, too, I hope; now God's dear blessing
Upon his heart that left it here, 'tis mine;
These pearls, I take it, were not left for swine. (Exit.)

Wife.—I do not like this unthrifty youth should embezzle away the money; the poor gentlewoman, his mother, will have a heavy heart for it, God knows.

Cit.—And reason good, sweetheart.

Wife.—But let him go; I'll tell Ralph a tale in's ear, shall fetch him again with a wanion, I warrant him, if he be above

ground; and besides, George, here be a number of sufficient gentlemen can witness, and myself, and yourself, and the musicians, if we be called in question; but here comes Ralph, George; thou shalt hear him speak, as he were an Emperial.

Enter Ralph and Dwarf.

Ralph.—Comes not Sir Squire again?

Dwarf.—Right courteous knight,

Your squire doth come, and with him comes the lady
Fair, and the squire of damsels, as I take it.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought, Michael and Squire.

Ralph.—Madam, if any service or devoir

Of a poor errant knight may right your wrongs,
Command it. I am pressed to give you succor,
For to that holy end I bear my armor.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Alas, sir, I am a poor gentlewoman, and I have lost my money in this forest.

Ralph.—Desert, you would say, lady, and not lost

Whilst I have sword and lance; dry up your tears,
Which ill befit the beauty of that face,
And tell the story, if I may request it,
Of your disastrous fortune.

Mist. Mer.—Out alas, I left a thousand pound, a thousand pound, e'en all the money I had laid up for this youth, upon the sight of your mastership. You looked so grim, and as I may say it, saving your presence, more like a giant than a mortal man.

Ralph.—I am as you are, lady, so are they

All mortal; but why weeps this gentle squire?

Mist. Mer.—Has he not cause to weep, do you think, when he has lost his inheritance?

Ralph.—Young hope of valor, weep not; I am here

That will confound thy foe, and pay it dear
Upon his coward head, that dare deny
Distresséd squires and ladies equity.
I have but one horse, upon which shall ride
This lady fair behind me, and before

This courteous squire; fortune will give us more
 Upon our next adventure; fairly speed
 Beside us, squire and dwarf, to do us need. (Exeunt.)

Cit.—Did not I tell you, Nell, what your man would do?
 By the faith of my body, wench, for clean action and good delivery, they may all cast their caps at him.

Wife.—And so they may, i'faith, for I dare speak it boldly, the twelve companies of London cannot match him, timber for timber. Well, George, an' he be not inveigled by some of these paltry players, I ha' much marvel; but, George, we ha' done our parts, if the boy have any grace to be thankful.

Cit.—Yes, I warrant you, duckling.

Enter Humphrey and Luce.

Humphrey.—Good Mistress Luce, however I in fault am
 For your lame horse, you're welcome unto Waltham!
 But which way now to go, or what to say,
 I know not, truly, till it be broad day.

Luce.—Oh, fear not, Master Humphrey, I am guide
 For this place good enough.

Hum.— Then up and ride,
 Or if it please you, walk for your repose,
 Or sit, or if you will, go pluck a rose:
 Either of which shall be indifferent
 To your good friend and Humphrey, whose consent
 Is so entangled ever to your will,
 As the poor harmless horse is to the mill.

Luce.—Faith, and you say the word, we'll e'en sit down,
 And take a nap.

Hum.— 'Tis better in the town,
 Where we may nap together; for, believe me,
 To sleep without a match would mickle grieve me.

Luce.—You're merry, Master Humphrey.

Hum.— So I am,
 And have been ever merry from my dam.

Luce.—Your nurse had the less labor.

Hum.— Faith, it may be,
 Unless it were by chance I did bewray me.

Enter Jasper.

Jasper.—Luce, dear friend Luce!

Luce.— Here, Jasper.

Jasp.— You are mine.

Hum.—If it be so, my friend, you use me fine:

What do you think I am?

Jasp.— An arrant noddy.

Hum.—A word of obloquy; now, by my body,

I'll tell thy master, for I know thee well.

Jasp.—Nay, an' you be so forward for to tell,

Take that, and that, and tell him, sir, I gave it:

(Beats him.)

And say I paid you well.

Hum.— Oh, sir, I have it,

And do confess the payment; pray be quiet.

Jasp.—Go, get you to your night-cap and the diet,

To cure your beaten bones.

Luce.— Alas, poor Humphrey,

Get thee some wholesome broth with sage and cumfry:

A little oil of roses, and a feather

To 'noint thy back withal.

Hum.— When I came hither,

Would I had gone to Paris with John Dory.

Luce.—Farewell, my pretty numps; I'm very sorry

I cannot bear thee company.

Hum.— Farewell.

The devil's dam was ne'er so bang'd in hell. (Exeunt.)

Manet Humphrey.

Wife.—This young Jasper will prove me another things, a my conscience, and he may be suffered; George, dost not see, George, how a swaggers, and flies at the very heads a folks as he were a dragon; well, if I do not do his lesson for wronging the poor gentleman, I am no true woman; his friends that brought him up might have been better occupied, I wis, than have taught him these fegaries: he's e'en in the highway to the gallows, God bless him.

Cit.—You're too bitter, cony; the young man may do well enough for all this.

Wife.—Come hither, Master Humphrey; has he hurt you? Now, beshrew his fingers for't; here, sweetheart, here's some green ginger for thee; now, beshrew my heart, but a has peppernel in's head as big as a pullet's egg; alas, sweet lamb, how thy temples beat; take the peace on him, sweetheart, take the peace on him.

Enter a Boy.

Cit.—No, no, you talk like a foolish woman; I'll ha Ralph fight with him, and swinge him up well-favor'dly. Sirrah, boy, come hither; let Ralph come in and fight with Jasper.

Wife.—Ay, and beat him well, he's an unhappy boy.

Boy.—Sir, you must pardon us; the plot of our play lies contrary, and 'twill hazard the spoiling of our play.

Cit.—Plot me no plots, I'll ha' Ralph come out; I'll make your house too hot for you else.

Boy.—Why, sir, he shall; but if anything fall out of order, the gentlemen must pardon us.

Cit.—Go your ways, goodman boy, I'll hold him a penny he shall have his belly full of fighting now. Ho, here comes Ralph; no more.

Enter Ralph, Mistress Merry-thought, Michael, Squire and Dwarf.

Ralph.—What knight is that, squire? Ask him if he keep
The passage bound by love of lady fair,
Or else but prickant.

Hum.— Sir, I am no knight,
But a poor gentleman, that this same night,
Had stolen from me, upon yonder green,
My lovely wife, and suffered (to be seen
Yet extant on my shoulders) such a greeting,
That whilst I live, I shall think of that meeting.

Wife.—Ay, Ralph, he beat him unmercifully, Ralph, an' thou spar'st him, Ralph, I would thou wert hang'd.

Cit.—No more, wife, no more.

Ralph.—Where is the caitiff wretch hath done this deed?

Lady, your pardon, that I may proceed
Upon the quest of this injurious knight.
And thou, fair squire, repute me not the worse,
In leaving the great 'venture of the purse
And the rich casket, till some better leisure.

Enter Jasper and Luce.

Hum.—Here comes the broker hath purloined my treasure.

Ralph.—Go, squire, and tell him I am here,
An errant knight at arms, to crave delivery
Of that fair lady to her own knight's arms.
If he deny, bid him take choice of ground,
And so defy him.

Squire.— From the knight that bears
The golden pestle, I defy thee, knight,
Unless thou make fair restitution
Of that bright lady.

Jasper.— Tell the knight that sent thee
He is an ass, and I will keep the wench,
And knock his head-piece.

Ralph.—Knight, thou art but dead,
If thou recall not thy uncourteous terms.

Wife.—Break his pate, Ralph; break his pate, Ralph,
soundly.

Jasp.—Come, knight, I'm ready for you; now your pestle
(Snatches away his pestle.)

Shall try what temper, sir, your mortar's of;
With that he stood upright in his stirrups,
And gave the knight of the calves'-skin such a knock
That he forsook his horse, and down he fell,
And then he leaped upon him, and plucking off his helmet—

Hum.—Nay, an' my noble knight be down so soon,
Though I can scarcely go, I needs must run—

(Exit Humphrey and Ralph.)

Wife.—Run, Ralph; run, Ralph; run for thy life, boy; Jasper comes, Jasper comes!

Jasp.—Come, Luce, we must have other arms for you.

Humphrey and Golden Pestle, both adieu. (Exeunt.)

Wife.—Sure the devil, God bless us, is in this springald; why, George, didst ever see such a fire-drake? I am afraid my boy's miscarried; if he be, though he were Master Merry-thought's son a thousand times, if there be any law in England, I'll make some of them smart for't.

Cit.—No, no; I have found out the matter, sweetheart. Jasper is enchanted, as sure as we are here, he is enchanted; he could no more have stood in Ralph's hands than I can stand in my lord mayor's; I'll have a ring to discover all enchantments, and Ralph shall beat him yet. Be no more vexed, for it shall be so.

Enter Ralph, Squire, Dwarf, Mistress Merry-thought and Michael.

Wife.—Oh, husband, here's Ralph again; stay, Ralph, let me speak with thee; how dost thou, Ralph? Art thou not shrewdly hurt? The foul great lunges laid unmercifully on thee! There's some sugar-candy for thee; proceed, thou shalt have another bout with him.

Cit.—If Ralph had him at the fencing-school, if he did not make a puppy of him, and drive him up and down the school, he should ne'er come in my shop more.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Truly, Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, I am weary.

Michael.—Indeed la, mother, and I'm very hungry.

Ralph.—Take comfort, gentle dame, and your fair squire.

For in this desert there must needs be placed
Many strong castles, held by courteous knights,
And till I bring you safe to one of those,
I swear by this my order ne'er to leave you.

Wife.—Well said, Ralph: George, Ralph was ever comfortable, was he not?

Cit.—Yes, duck.

Wife.—I shall ne'er forget him. When we had lost our child, you know it was strayed almost alone to Puddle Wharf, and the criers were abroad for it, and there it had drowned

itself but for a sculler, Ralph was the most comfortablest to me: "Peace, mistress," says he, "let it go; I'll get you another as good." Did he not, George? Did he not say so?

Cit.—Yes, indeed did he, mouse.

Dwarf.—I would we had a mess of pottage and a pot of drink, squire, and were going to bed.

Squire.—Why, we are at Waltham town's end, and that's the Bell Inn.

Dwarf.—Take courage, valiant knight, damsel and squire,
I have discovered, not a stone's cast off,
An ancient castle held by the old knight
Of the most holy order of the Bell,
Who gives to all knights errant entertain;
There plenty is of food, and all prepar'd
By the white hands of his own lady dear.
He hath three squires that welcome all his guests:
The first, high Chamberlino, who will see
Our beds prepared, and bring us snowy sheets;
The second hight Tapstero, who will see
Our pots full filléd, and no froth therein;
The third, a gentle squire Ostlero hight,
Who will our palfreys slick with wisps of straw,
And in the manger put them oats enough,
And never grease their teeth with candle-snuff.

Wife.—That same dwarf's a pretty boy, but the squire's a grout-nold.

Ralph.—Knock at the gates, my squire, with stately lance.

Enter Tapster.

Tapster.—Who's there, you're welcome, gentlemen; will you see a room?

Dwarf.—Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, this is the squire Tapstero.

Ralph.—Fair squire Tapstero, I, a wandering knight,
Hight of the Burning Pestle, in the quest
Of this fair lady's casket and wrought purse,
Losing myself in this vast wilderness,
Am to this castle well by fortune brought,

Where, hearing of the goodly entertain
Your knight of holy order of the Bell
Gives to all damsels, and all errant knights,
I thought to knock, and now am bold to enter.

Tap.—An't please you see a chamber, you are very welcome. (Exeunt.)

Wife.—George, I would have something done, and I cannot tell what it is.

Cit.—What is it, Nell?

Wife.—Why, George, shall Ralph beat nobody again? Prithee, sweetheart, let him.

Cit.—So he shall, Nell, and if I join with him, we'll knock them all.

Enter Humphrey and Merchant.

Wife.—Oh, George, here's Master Humphrey again, now, that lost Mistress Luce, and Mistress Luce's father. Master Humphrey will do somebody's errand, I warrant him.

Humphrey.—Father, it's true in arms I ne'er shall clasp her,
For she is stol'n away by your man Jasper.

Wife.—I thought he would tell him.

Merchant.—Unhappy that I am to lose my child:
Now I begin to think on Jasper's words,
Who oft hath urg'd to me thy foolishness;
Why didst thou let her go? Thou lov'st her not,
That wouldst bring home thy life, and not bring her.

Hum.—Father, forgive me, I shall tell you true,
Look on my shoulders, they are black and blue;
Whilst to and fro fair Luce and I were winding,
He came and basted me with a hedge binding.

Merch.—Get men and horses straight, we will be there
Within this hour; you know the place again?

Hum.—I know the place where he my loins did swaddle,
I'll get six horses, and to each a saddle.

Merch.—Meantime I will go talk with Jasper's father.

(Exeunt.)

Wife.—George, what wilt thou lay with me now, that Master Humphrey has not Mistress Luce yet? Speak, George, what wilt thou lay with me?

Cit.—No, Nell, I warrant thee, Jasper is at Puckeridge with her by this.

Wife.—Nay, George, you must consider Mistress Luce's feet are tender, and besides, 'tis dark, and I promise you truly, I do not see how he should get out of Waltham Forest with her yet.

Cit.—Nay, honey, what wilt thou lay with me that Ralph has her not yet?

Wife.—I will not lay against Ralph, honey, because I have not spoken with him: but look, George, peace, here comes the merry old gentleman again.

Enter Old Merry-thought.

Old Merry-thought.—"When it was grown to dark midnight,
And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet."

I have money and meat and drink beforehand till to-morrow at noon; why should I be sad? Methinks I have half a dozen jovial spirits within me, "I am three merry men, and three merry men." To what end should any man be sad in this world? Give me a man that when he goes to hanging cries, "Troul the black bowl to me;" and a woman that will sing a catch in her travail. I have seen a man come by my door with a serious face, in a black cloak, without a hatband, carrying his head as if he looked for pins in the street. I have looked out of my window half a year after, and have spied that man's head upon London Bridge. 'Tis vile! Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work; his mind is of nothing but filching.

Wife.—Mark this, George, 'tis worth noting: Godfrey, my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown: and I'll be sworn, Mistress Penistone, the draper's wife, had one made with twelve.

Old Mer.—" 'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,
More than wine, or sleep, or food;
Let each man keep his heart at ease,
No man dies of that disease!
He that would his body keep
From diseases, must not weep;

But whoever laughs and sings,
 Never he his body brings
 Into fevers, gouts or rheums,
 Or ling'ringly his lungs consumes;
 Or meets with achés in the bone,
 Or catarrhs, or griping stone:
 But contented lives by aye,
 The more he laughs, the more he may."

Wife.—Look, George. How say'st thou by this, George?
 Is't not a fine old man? Now, God's blessing a thy sweet lips.
 When wilt thou be so merry, George? Faith, thou art the
 frowningest little thing, when thou art angry, in a country.

Enter Merchant.

Cit.—Peace, cony; thou shalt see him look down, too, I
 warrant thee. Here's Luce's father come now.

Old Mer.—"As you came from Walsingham,
 From the Holy Land,
 There met you not with my true love
 By the way as you came?"

Merchant.—Oh, Master Merry-thought! my daughter's gone!
 This mirth becomes you not, my daughter's gone!

Old Mer.—"Why, an' if she be, what care I?
 Or let her come home, or go, or tarry?"

Merch.—Mock not my misery, it is your son
 (Whom I have made my own, when all forsook him)
 Has stol'n my only joy, my child, away.

Old Mer.—"He set her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself upon a gray;
 He never turned his face again,
 But he bore her quite away."

Merch.—Unworthy of the kindness I have shown
 To thee and thine; too late, I well perceive
 Thou art consenting to my daughter's loss.

Old Mer.—Your daughter? What a stir's here wi' y'r
 daughter? Let her go, think no more on her, but sing loud.
 If both my sons were on the gallows I would sing,
 "Down, down, down: they fall
 Down, and arise they never shall."

Merch.—Oh, might but I behold her once again,
And she once more embrace her aged sire.

Old Mer.—Fie, how scurvily this goes:

“And she once more embrace her aged sire!”

You’ll make a dog on her, will ye? She cares much for her
aged sire, I warrant you.

“She cares not for her daddy, nor
She cares not for her mammy,
For she is, she is, she is my
Lord of Low-gaves lassie.”

Merch.—For this thy scorn I will pursue
That son of thine to death.

Old Mer.—Do; and when you ha’ killed him,
“Give him flowers enow, Palmer, give him flowers enow,
Give him red and white, blue, green and yellow.”

Merch.—I’ll fetch my daughter.

Old Mer.—I’ll hear no more o’ your daughter; it spoils my
mirth.

Merch.—I say I’ll fetch my daughter.

Old Mer.—“Was never man for lady’s sake, down, down,
Tormented as I, Sir Guy? de derry down,
For Lucy’s sake, that lady bright, down, down,
As ever man beheld with eye? de derry down.”

Merch.—I’ll be revenged, by heaven! (Exeunt.)

Wife.—How dost thou like this, George?

Cit.—Why, this is well, dovey; but if Ralph were hot once,
thou shouldst see more.

Wife.—The fiddlers go again, husband.

Cit.—Ay, Nell, but this is scurvy music; I gave the young
gallows money, and I think he has not got me the waits of
Southwark. If I hear ’em not anon, I’ll twing him by the ears.
You musicians play Baloo.

Wife.—No, good George, let’s have Lachrymæ.

Cit.—Why, this is it, bird.

Wife.—Is’t? All the better, George; now, sweet lamb, what
story is that painted upon the cloth? The Confutation of St.
Paul?

Cit.—No, lamb, that's Ralph and Lucrece.

Wife.—Ralph and Lucrece? Which Ralph? our Ralph?

Cit.—No, mouse; that was a Tartarian.

Wife.—A Tartarian? Well, I would the fiddlers had done,
that we might see our Ralph again.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter Jasper and Luce.

Jasper.—Come, my dear dear; though we have lost our way,
We have not lost ourselves. Are you not weary
With this night's wand'ring, broken from your rest?
And frighted with the terror that attends
The darkness of this wild unpeopled place?

Luce.—No, my best friend, I cannot either fear
Or entertain a weary thought whilst you
(The end of all my full desires) stand by me.
Let them that lose their hopes, and live to languish
Among the number of forsaken lovers,
Tell the long weary steps and number time,
Start at a shadow, and shrink up their blood,
Whilst I (possessed with all content and quiet)
Thus take my pretty love, and thus embrace him.

Jasp.—You've caught me, Luce, so fast, that whilst I live
I shall become your faithful prisoner,
And wear these chains forever. Come, sit down,
And rest your body, too, too delicate
For these disturbances; so, will you sleep?
Come, do not be more able than you are;
I know you are not skillful in these watches,
For women are no soldiers; be not nice,
But take it; sleep, I say.

Luce.— I cannot sleep,
Indeed I cannot, friend.

Jasp.— Why, then we'll sing,
And try how that will work upon our senses.

Luce.—I'll sing, or say, or anything but sleep.

Jasp.—Come, little mermaid, rob me of my heart
With that enchanting voice.

Luce.—You mock me, Jasper.

SONG.

Jasp.—Tell me, dearest, what is love?

Luce.—'Tis a lightning from above,
'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire,
'Tis a boy they call Desire.
'Tis a smile
Doth beguile

Jasp.—The poor hearts of men that prove.
Tell me more, are women true?

Luce.—Some love change, and so do you.

Jasp.— Are they fair, and never kind?

Luce.— Yes, when men turn with the wind.

Jasp.—Are they froward?

Luce.—Ever toward
Those that love, to love anew.

Jasp.—Dissemble it no more, I see the god
Of heavy sleep lays on his heavy mace
Upon your eyelids.

Luce.— I am very heavy.

Jasp.—Sleep, sleep, and quiet rest crown thy sweet thoughts:
Keep from her fair blood all distempers, startings,
Horrors and fearful shapes: let all her dreams
Be joys and chaste delights, embraces, wishes,
And such new pleasures as the ravish'd soul
Gives to the senses. So, my charms have took.
Keep her, ye Powers Divine, whilst I contemplate
Upon the wealth and beauty of her mind.
She's only fair and constant, only kind,
And only to thee, Jasper. O my joys!
Whither will you transport me? Let not fullness
Of my poor buried hopes come up together,
And overcharge my spirits; I am weak.
Some say (however ill) the sea and women

Are govern'd by the moon, both ebb and flow,
 Both full of changes: yet to them that know,
 And truly judge, these but opinions are,
 And heresies to bring on pleasing war
 Between our tempers, that without these were
 Both void of after-love and present fear;
 Which are the best of Cupid. O thou child!
 Bred from despair, I dare not entertain thee,
 Having a love without the faults of women,
 And greater in her perfect goods than men;
 Which to make good, and please myself the stronger,
 Though certainly I'm certain of her love,
 I'll try her, that the world and memory
 May sing to after-times her constancy.
 Luce, Luce, awake!

Luce.— Why do you fright me, friend,
 With those distempered looks? What makes your sword
 Drawn in your hand? Who hath offended you?
 I prithee, Jasper, sleep; thou'rt wild with watching.

Jasp.—Come, make your way to heav'n, and bid the world,
 With all the villainies that stick upon it,
 Farewell; you're for another life.

Luce.— Oh, Jasper,
 How have my tender years committed evil,
 Especially against the man I love,
 Thus to be cropt untimely?

Jasp.— Foolish girl,
 Canst thou imagine I could love his daughter
 That flung me from my fortune into nothing?
 Dischargéd me his service, shut the doors
 Upon my poverty, and scorn'd my prayers,
 Sending me, like a boat without a mast,
 To sink or swim? Come, by this hand you die;
 I must have life and blood, to satisfy
 Your father's wrongs.

Wife.—Away, George, away; raise the watch at Ludgate,
 and bring a mittimus from the justice for this desperate vil-
 lain. Now, I charge you, gentlemen, see the king's peace kept.
 Oh, my heart, what a varlet's this, to offer manslaughter upon
 the harmless gentlewoman!

Cit.—I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him hampered.

Luce.—Oh, Jasper! be not cruel.

If thou wilt kill me, smile, and do it quickly,

And let not many deaths appear before me.

I am a woman made of fear and love,

A weak, weak woman; kill not with thy eyes:

They shoot me through and through. Strike, I am ready,

And dying, still I love thee.

Enter Merchant, Humphrey and his men.

Merchant.—Whereabouts?

Jasper.—No more of this; now to myself again.

Humphrey.—There, there he stands with sword, like martial knight,

Drawn in his hand; therefore beware the fight,

You that are wise; for were I good Sir Bevis,

I would not stay his coming, by your leaves.

Merch.—Sirrah, restore my daughter.

Jasp.—Sirrah, no.

Merch.—Upon him, then.

Wife.—So, down with him, down with him, down with him!

Cut him i' the leg, boys, cut him i' the leg!

Merch.—Come your ways, minion, I'll provide a cage for you, you're grown so tame. Horse her away.

Hum.—Truly I am glad your forces have the day.

(Exeunt.)

Manet Jasper.

Jasp.—They're gone, and I am hurt; my love is lost,

Never to get again. Oh, me unhappy!

Bleed, bleed and die—— I cannot; oh, my folly!

Thou hast betrayed me; hope, where art thou fled?

Tell me, if thou be'st anywhere remaining.

Shall I but see my love again? Oh, no!

She will not deign to look upon her butcher,

Nor is it fit she should; yet I must venture.

Oh, chance, or fortune, or whate'er thou art

That men adore for powerful, hear my cry,

And let me loving live, or losing die.

(Exit.)

Wife.—Is he gone, George?

Cit.—Ay, coney.

Wife.—Marry, and let him go, sweetheart, by the faith a my body, a has put me into such a fright that I tremble (as they say) as 'twere an aspen leaf. Look a my little finger, George, how it shakes: now, in truth, every member of my body is the worse for't.

Cit.—Come, hug in mine arms, sweet mouse; he shall not fright thee any more; alas, mine own dear heart, how it quivers!

Enter Mistress Merry-thought, Ralph, Michael, Squire, Dwarf, Host and a Tapster.

Wife.—Oh, Ralph! how dost thou, Ralph? How hast thou slept to-night? Has the knight used thee well?

Cit.—Peace, Nell; let Ralph alone.

Tapster.—Master, the reckoning is not paid.

Ralph.—Right courteous knight, who for the order's sake
Which thou hast ta'en, hang'st out the holy Bell,
As I this flaming pestle bear about,
We render thanks to your puissant self,
Your beauteous lady, and your gentle squires,
For thus refreshing of our wearied limbs,
Stiffened with hard achievements in wild desert.

Tap.—Sir, there is twelve shillings to pay.

Ralph.—Thou merry squire Tapstero, thanks to thee
For comforting our souls with double jug;
And if adventurous fortune prick thee forth,
Thou jovial squire, to follow feats of arms,
Take heed thou tender ev'ry lady's cause,
Ev'ry true knight, and ev'ry damsel fair,
But spill the blood of treacherous Saracens
And false enchanters, that with magic spells
Have done to death full many a noble knight.

Host.—Thou valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, give ear to me: there is twelve shillings to pay, and as I am a true knight, I will not bate a penny.

Wife.—George, I prithee tell me, must Ralph pay twelve shillings now?

Cit.—No, Nell, no, nothing; but the old knight is merry with Ralph.

Wife.—Oh, is't nothing else? Ralph will be as merry as he.

Ralph.—Sir Knight, this mirth of yours becomes you well,
But to requite this liberal courtesy,
If any of your squires will follow arms,
He shall receive from my heroic hand
A knighthood, by the virtue of this pestle.

Host.—Fair knight, I thank you for your noble offer; therefore, gentle knight, twelve shillings you must pay, or I must cap you.

Wife.—Look, George, did not I tell thee as much? The knight of the Bell is in earnest. Ralph shall not be beholding to him; give him his money, George, and let him go snick-up.

Cit.—Cap Ralph? No; hold your hand, Sir Knight of the Bell; there's your money. Have you anything to say to Ralph now? Cap Ralph?

Wife.—I would you should know it, Ralph has friends that will not suffer him to be capped for ten times so much, and ten times to the end of that. Now take thy course, Ralph.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Come, Michael, thou and I will go home to thy father; he hath enough left to keep us a day or two, and we'll set fellows abroad to cry our purse and casket. Shall we, Michael?

Michael.—Ay, I pray, mother; in truth, my feet are full of chilblains with travelling.

Wife.—Faith, and those chilblains are a foul trouble. Mistress Merry-thought, when your youth comes home, let him rub all the soles of his feet and his heels and his ankles with a mouse-skin; or if none of you can catch a mouse, when he goes to bed, let him roll his feet in the warm embers, and I warrant you he shall be well; and you may make him put his fingers between his toes and smell to them; it's very sovereign for his head if he be costive.

Mist. Mer.—Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, my son Michael and I bid you farewell; I thank your worship heartily for your kindness,

Ralph.—Farewell, fair lady, and your tender squire.
If, pricking through these deserts, I do hear
Of any trait'rous knight who, through his guile,
Hath light upon your casket and your purse,
I will despoil him of them and restore them.

Mist. Mer.—I thank your worship. (Exit with Michael.)

Ralph.—Dwarf, bear my shield; squire, elevate my lance;
And now farewell, you knight of holy Bell.

Cit.—Ay, ay, Ralph; all is paid.

Ralph.—But yet before I go, speak, worthy knight,
If aught you do of sad adventures know,
Where errant knight may through his prowess win
Eternal fame, and free some gentle souls
From endless bonds of steel and ling'ring pain.

Host.—Sirrah, go to Nick the Barber, and bid him prepare himself, as I told you before, quickly.

Tap.—I am gone, sir. (Exit Tapster.)

Host.—Sir Knight, this wilderness affordeth none
But the great venture, where full many a knight
Hath tried his prowess, and come off with shame,
And where I would not have you lose your life,
Against no man, but furious fiend of hell.

Ralph.—Speak on, Sir Knight; tell what he is, and where:
For here I vow upon my blazing badge,
Never to lose a day in quietness;
But bread and water will I only eat,
And the green herb and rock shall be my couch,
Till I have quell'd that man, or beast, or fiend,
That works such damage to all errant knights.

Host.—Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff
At the north end of this distresséd town,
There doth stand a lowly house
Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave,
In which an ugly giant now doth dwell,
Yclepéd Barbaroso: in his hand
He shakes a naked lance of purest steel,
With sleeves turned up, and he before him wears
A motley garment, to preserve his clothes

From blood of those knights which he massacres,
And ladies gent: without his door doth hang
A copper basin on a prickant spear;
At which, no sooner gentle knights can knock,
But the shrill sound fierce Barbaroso hears,
And, rushing forth, brings in the errant knight,
And sets him down in an enchanted chair:
Then with an engine, which he hath prepar'd
With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown,
Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin
He plants a brazen piece of mighty bore,
And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks,
Whilst with his fingers, and an instrument
With which he snaps his hair off, he doth fill
The wretch's ears with a most hideous noise.
Thus every knight adventurer he doth trim,
And now no creature dares encounter him.

Ralph.—In God's name, I will fight with him, kind sir.
Go but before me to this dismal cave
Where this huge giant Barbaroso dwells,
And by that virtue that brave Rosiclere
That wicked brood of ugly giants slew,
And Palmerin Frannarco overthrew,
I doubt not but to curb this traitor foul,
And to the devil send his guilty soul.

Host.—Brave-sprighted knight, thus far I will perform
This your request; I'll bring you within sight
Of this most loathsome place, inhabited
By a more loathsome man: but dare not stay,
For his main force swoops all he sees away.

Ralph.—St. George! Set on; before march squire and page.

(Exeunt.)

Wife.—George, dost think Ralph will confound the giant?

Cit.—I hold my cap to a farthing he does. Why, Nell, I
saw him wrestle with the great Dutchman, and hurl him.

Wife.—Faith, and that Dutchman was a goodly man, if all
things were answerable to his bigness. And yet they say there
was a Scottishman higher than he, and that they two on a
night met, and saw one another for nothing.

Cit.—Nay, by your leave, Nell, Ninivie was better.

Wife.—Ninivie? Oh, that was the story of Joan and the Wall, was it not, George?

Cit.—Yes, lamb.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought.

Wife.—Look, George, here comes Mistress Merry-thought again, and I would have Ralph come and fight with the giant. I tell you true, I long to see't.

Cit.—Good Mistress Merry-thought, begone, I pray you, for my sake; I pray you forbear a little, you shall have audience presently: I have a little business.

Wife.—Mistress Merry-thought, if it please you to refrain your passion a little, till Ralph have dispatched the giant out of the way, we shall think ourselves much bound to thank you. I thank you, good Mistress Merry-thought.

(Exit Mistress Merry-thought.)

Enter a Boy.

Cit.—Boy, come hither; send away Ralph and this master giant quickly.

Boy.—In good faith, sir, we cannot; you'll utterly spoil our play, and make it to be hissed, and it cost money; you will not suffer us to go on with our plots. I pray, gentlemen, rule him.

Cit.—Let him come now and dispatch this, and I'll trouble you no more.

Boy.—Will you give me your hand of that?

Wife.—Give him thy hand, George, do, and I'll kiss him; I warrant thee the youth means plainly.

Boy.—I'll send him to you presently. (Exit Boy.)

Wife.—I thank you, little youth; faith, the child hath a sweet breath, George, but I think it be troubled with the worms; Carduus Benedictus and mare's milk were the only thing in the world for it. Oh, Ralph's here, George! God send thee good luck, Ralph!

Enter Ralph, Host, Squire and Dwarf.

Host.—Puissant knight, yonder his mansion is,
Lo, where the spear and copper basin are;

Behold the string on which hangs many a tooth
Drawn from the gentle jaw of wandering knights;
I dare not stay to sound, he will appear. (Exit host.)

Ralph.—Oh, faint not, heart: Susan, my dear lady,
The cobbler's maid in Milk street, for whose sake
I take these arms, Oh, let the thought of thee
Carry thy knight through all adventurous deed,
And in the honor of thy beauteous self,
May I destroy this monster Barbaroso.
Knock, squire, upon the basin till it break
With the shrill strokes, or till the giant speak.

Enter Barbaroso.

Wife.—Oh, George, the giant, the giant! Now, Ralph, for thy life!

Barbaroso.—What fond unknowing wight is this, that dares
So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell,
Where no man comes, but leaves his fleece behind?

Ralph.—I, traitorous caitiff, who am sent by fate
To punish all the sad enormities
Thou hast committed against ladies gent
And errant knights, traitor to God and men.
Prepare thyself; this is the dismal hour
Appointed for thee to give strict account
Of all thy beastly treacherous villainies.

Bar.—Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby
This fond reproach; thy body will I bang,
(He takes down his pole.)

And lo, upon that string thy teeth shall hang;
Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be.

Ralph.—St. George for me! (They fight.)

Bar.—Gargantua for me!

Wife.—To him, Ralph, to him: hold up the giant, set out thy leg before, Ralph!

Cit.—Falsify a blow, Ralph, falsify a blow; the giant lies open on the left side.

Wife.—Bear't off, bear't off still; there, boy. Oh, Ralph's almost down, Ralph's almost down!

Ralph.—Susan, inspire me; now have up again.

Wife.—Up, up, up, up, up, so, Ralph; down with him, down with him, Ralph!

Cit.—Fetch him over the hip, boy.

Wife.—There, boy; kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Ralph!

Cit.—No, Ralph, get all out of him first.

Ralph.—Presumptuous man, see to what desperate end

Thy treachery hath brought thee; the just gods,
Who never prosper those that do despise them,
For all the villainies which thou hast done
To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home
By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous.
But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul
To sad Avernus, whither it must go,
What captives hold'st thou in thy sable cave?

Bar.—Go in and free them all; thou hast the day.

Ralph.—Go, squire and dwarf, search in this dreadful cave,
And free the wretched prisoners from their bonds.

(*Exeunt Squire and Dwarf.*)

Bar.—I crave for mercy, as thou art a knight,
And scorn'st to spill the blood of those that beg.

Ralph.—Thou showest no mercy, nor shalt thou have any;
Prepare thyself, for thou shalt surely die.

Enter Squire, leading one winking, with a basin under his chin.

Squire.—Behold, brave knight, here is one prisoner,
Whom this wild man hath used as you see.

Wife.—This is the wisest word I hear the squire speak.

Ralph.—Speak what thou art, and how thou hast been us'd,
That I may give him condign punishment.

First Knight.—I am a knight that took my journey post
Northward from London, and in courteous wise;
This giant train'd me to his loathsome den,
Under pretense of killing of the itch,
And all my body with a powder strew'd,
That smarts and stings, and cut away my beard,
And my curl'd locks wherein were ribands tied,

And with a water washed my tender eyes
(Whilst up and down about me still he skipt),
Whose virtue is, that till my eyes be wiped
With a dry cloth, for this my foul disgrace,
I shall not dare to look a dog i' th' face.

Wife.—Alas, poor knight! Relieve him, Ralph; relieve
poor knights whilst you live.

Ralph.—My trusty squire, convey him to the town,
Where he may find relief; adieu, fair knight.

(Exit Knight.)

Enter Dwarf, leading one with a patch over his nose.

Dwarf.—Puissant Knight of the Burning Pestle hight,
See here another wretch, whom this foul beast
Hath scotch'd and scor'd in this inhuman wise.

Ralph.—Speak me thy name, and eke thy place of birth,
And what hath been thy usage in this cave.

Second Knight.—I am a knight, Sir Partle is my name,
And by my birth I am a Londoner,
Free by my copy, but my ancestors
Were Frenchmen all; and riding hard this way,
Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache,
And I, faint knight, to ease my weary limbs,
Light at this cave, when straight this furious fiend,
With sharpest instrument of purest steel,
Did cut the gristle of my nose away,
And in the place this velvet plaster stands.
Relieve me, gentle knight, out of his hands.

Wife.—Good Ralph, relieve Sir Partle, and send him away,
for in truth, his breath stinks.

Ralph.—Convey him straight after the other knight. Sir
Partle, fare you well.

Second Knight.—Kind sir, good-night.

(Exit.)

(Cries within.)

Man.—Deliver us!

Woman.—Deliver us!

Wife.—Hark, George, what a woeful cry there is. I think
some one is ill there.

Man.—Deliver us!

Wom.—Deliver us!

Ralph.—What ghastly noise is this? Speak, Barbaroso,
Or, by this blazing steel, thy head goes off.

Bar.—Prisoners of mine, whom I in diet keep.
Send lower down into the cave,
And in a tub that's heated smoking hot,
There may they find them, and deliver them.

Ralph.—Run, squire and dwarf, deliver them with speed.
(Exeunt Squire and Dwarf.)

Wife.—But will not Ralph kill this giant? Surely I am
afraid if he let him go he will do as much hurt as ever he did.

Cit.—Not so, mouse, neither, if he could convert him.

Wife.—Ay, George, if he could convert him; but a giant is
not so soon converted as one of us ordinary people. There's a
pretty tale of a witch, that had the devil's mark about her, God
bless us, that had a giant to her son, that was called Lob-lie-
by-the-fire. Didst never hear it, George?

Enter Squire, leading a man with a glass of lotion in his hand,
and the Dwarf, leading a woman with bread and drink.

Cit.—Peace, Nell; here come the prisoners.

Dwarf.—Here be these pined wretches, manful knight,
That for these six weeks have not seen a wight.

Ralph.—Deliver what you are, and how you came
To this sad cave, and what your usage was.

Man.—I am an errant knight that followed arms,
With spear and shield, and in my tender years
I stricken was with Cupid's fiery shaft,
And fell in love with this my lady dear,
And stole her from her friends in Turnball street,
And bore her up and down from town to town,
Where we did eat and drink, and music hear;
Till at the length at this unhappy town
We did arrive, and coming to this cave,
This beast us caught, and put us in a tub,
Where we this two months sweat, and should have done
Another month if you had not relieved us.

Wom.—This bread and water hath our diet been,
Together with a rib cut from a neck
Of burned mutton; hard hath been our fare.
Release us from this ugly giant's snare.

Man.—This hath been all the food we have receiv'd;
But only twice a day, for novelty,
He gave a spoonful of this hearty broth

(Pulls out a syringe.)

To each of us, through this same slender quill.

Ralph.—From this infernal monster you shall go,
That useth knights and gentle ladies so.
Convey them hence. (Exeunt Man and Woman.)

Cit.—Mouse, I can tell thee, the gentlemen like Ralph.

Wife.—Ay, George, I see it well enough. Gentlemen, I
thank you all heartily for gracing my man Ralph, and I promise
you, you shall see him oftener.

Bar.—Mercy! great knight; I do recant my ill,
And henceforth never again gentle blood will spill.

Ralph.—I give thee mercy, but yet thou shalt swear
Upon my burning pestle to perform
Thy promise utter'd.

Bar.—I swear and kiss.

Ralph.—Depart, then, and amend.

Come, squire and dwarf, the sun grows toward his set,
And we have many more adventures yet. (Exeunt.)

Cit.—Now Ralph is in this humor, I know he would ha'
beaten all the boys in the house, if they had been set on him.

Wife.—Ay, George, but it is well as it is. I warrant you
the gentlemen do consider what it is to overthrow a giant.
But look, George, here comes Mistress Merry-thought and her
son Michael. Now you are welcome, Mistress Merry-thought;
now Ralph has done, you may go on.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought and Michael.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Mick, my boy.

Michael.—Ay, forsooth, mother.

Mist. Mer.—Be merry, Mick; we are at home, now, where
I warrant you, you shall find the house flung out of the win-

dows. Hark! hey dogs, hey, this is the old world, i'faith, with my husband. I'll get in among them, I'll play them such a lesson that they shall have little list to come scraping hither again. Why, Master Merry-thought, husband, Charles Merry-thought!

Old Merry-thought.—(Within.) “If you will sing and dance and laugh,

And holloa, and laugh again;

And then cry, there, boys, there; why then,

One, two, three and four,

We shall be merry within this hour.”

Mist. Mer.—Why, Charles, do you not know your own natural wife? I say, open the door, and turn me out those mangy companions; 'tis more than time that they were fellow like with you. You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself, though I say it, by my mother's side, niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor; he has been three times in his majesty's service at Chester, and is now the fourth time, God bless him, and his charge upon his journey.

Old Mer.—“Go from my window, love, go;

Go from my window, my dear,

The wind and the rain will drive you back again,

You cannot be lodgéd here.”

Hark you, Mistress Merry-thought, you that walk upon adventures and forsake your husband because he sings with never a penny in his purse; woe, shall I think myself the worse? Faith, no, I'll be merry. You come not here, here's none but lads of mettle, lives of a hundred years and upward; care never drunk their bloods, nor want made them warble,

“Heigh-ho, my heart is heavy.”

Mist. Mer.—Why, Master Merry-thought, what am I, that you should laugh me to scorn thus abruptly? Am I not your fellow-feeler, as we may say, in all our miseries? your comforter in health and sickness? Have I not brought you children? Are they not like you, Charles? Look upon thine own image, hard-hearted man; and yet for all this—

Old Mer.—(Within.) “Begone, begone, my juggy, my puggy, Begone, my love, my dear;

The weather is warm,
 'Twill do thee no harm,
 Thou canst not be lodg'd here."

Be merry, boys; some light music, and more wine.

Wife.—He's not in earnest, I hope, George, is he?

Cit.—What if he be, sweetheart?

Wife.—Marry, if he be, George, I'll make bold to tell him he's an ingrant old man, to use his wife so scurvily.

Cit.—What, how does he use her, honey?

Wife.—Marry, come up, Sir Sauce-box; I think you'll take his part, will you not? Lord, how hot are you grown; you are a fine man, an' you had a fine dog, it becomes you sweetly.

Cit.—Nay, prithee, Nell, chide not; for as I am an honest man, and a true Christian grocer, I do not like his doings.

Wife.—I cry you mercy, then, George; you know we are all frail, and full of infirmities. D'ye hear, Master Merry-thought, may I crave a word with you?

Old Mer.—(Within.) Strike up lively, lads.

Wife.—I had not thought, in truth, Master Merry-thought, that a man of your age and discretion, as I may say, being a gentleman, and therefore known by your gentle conditions, could have used so little respect to the weakness of his wife; for your wife is your own flesh, the staff of your age, your yoke-fellow, with whose help you draw through the mire of this transitory world. Nay, she is your own rib. And again——

Old Mer.—"I come not hither for thee to teach,
 I have no pulpit for thee to preach,
 As thou art a lady gay."

Wife.—Marry, with a vengeance! I am heartily sorry for the poor gentlewoman; but if I were thy wife, i'faith, gray-beard, i'faith——

Cit.—I prithee, sweet honeysuckle, be content.

Wife.—Give me such words that am a gentlewoman born! hang him, hoary rascal! Get me some drink, George, I am almost molten with fretting. Now, beshrew his knave's heart for it.

Old Mer.—Play me a light lavalto. Come, be frolic; fill the good fellows wine.

Mist. Mer.—Why, Master Merry-thought, are you disposed to make me wait here? You'll open, I hope; I'll fetch them that shall open, else.

Old Mer.—Good woman, if you will sing, I'll give you something; if not—

SONG.

You are no love for me, Marget,
I am no love for you.
Come aloft, boys, aloft.

Mist. Mer.—Now, a churl's fist in your teeth, sir. Come, Mick, we'll not trouble him; a shall not ding us i' th' teeth with his bread and his broth, that he shall not. Come, boy, I'll provide for thee, I warrant thee. We'll go to Master Venterwels, the merchant; I'll get his letter to mine host of the Bell in Waltham; there I'll place thee with the tapster. Will not that do well for thee, Mick? And let me alone for that old rascally knave, your father; I'll use him in his kind. I warrant ye.

Wife.—Come, George, where's the beer?

Cit.—Here, love.

Wife.—This old fumigating fellow will not out of my mind yet. Gentlemen, I'll begin to you all, I desire more of your acquaintance, with all my heart. Fill the gentlemen some beer, George.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Boy dances.

Wife.—Look, George, the little boy's come again; methinks he looks something like the Prince of Orange, in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck. George, I will have him dance Fading; Fading is a fine jig, I'll assure you, gentlemen. Begin, brother; now a capers, sweetheart; now a turn a th' toe, and then tumble. Cannot you tumble, youth?

Boy.—No, indeed, forsooth.

Wife.—Nor eat fire?

Boy.—Neither.

Wife.—Why, then I thank you heartily; there's twopence to buy you points withal.

Enter Jasper and Boy.

Jasper.—There, boy, deliver this. But do it well.
Hast thou provided me with four lusty fellows,
Able to carry me? And art thou perfect
In all thy business?

Boy.—Sir, you need not fear;
I have my lesson here, and cannot miss it:
The men are ready for you, and what else
Pertains to this employment.

Jasp.—There, my boy;
Take it, but buy no land.

Boy.—Faith, sir, 'twere rare
To see so young a purchaser. I fly,
And on my wings carry your destiny. (Exit.)

Jasp.—Go, and be happy. Now, my latest hope
Forsake me not, but fling thy anchor out,
And let it hold. Stand fixed, thou rolling stone,
Till I possess my dearest. Hear me, all
You powers, that rule in men, celestial. (Exit.)

Wife.—Go thy ways; thou art as crooked a sprig as ever
grew in London. I warrant him he'll come to some naughty
end or other; for his looks say no less. Besides, his father
(you know, George) is none of the best; you heard him take
me up like a gill flirt, and sing bad songs upon me. But,
i'faith, if I live, George—

Cit.—Let me alone, sweetheart; I have a trick in my head
shall lodge him in the Arches for one year, and make him sing
Peccavi, ere I leave him, and yet he shall never know who hurt
him, neither.

Wife.—Do, my good George, do.

Cit.—What shall we have Ralph do now, boy?

Boy.—You shall have what you will, sir.

Cit.—Why, so, sir, go and fetch me him, then, and let the
Sophy of Persia come and christen him a child.

Boy.—Believe me, sir, that will not do so well; 'tis stale; it has been had before at the Red Bull.

Wife.—George, let Ralph travel over great hills, and let him be weary, and come to the King of Cracovia's house, covered with black velvet, and there let the king's daughter stand in her window all in beaten gold, combing her golden locks with a comb of ivory, and let her spy Ralph, and fall in love with him, and come down to him, and carry him into her father's house, and then let Ralph talk with her.

Cit.—Well said, Nell; it shall be so. Boy, let's ha't done quickly.

Boy.—Sir, if you will imagine all this to be done already, you shall hear them talk together. But we cannot present a house covered with black velvet, and a lady in beaten gold.

Cit.—Sir Boy, let's ha't as you can, then.

Boy.—Besides, it will show ill-favoredly to have a grocer's 'prentice to court a king's daughter.

Cit.—Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories: I pray you what was Sir Dagonet? Was not he 'prentice to a grocer in London? Read the play of the "Four 'Prentices of London," where they toss their pikes so. I pray you fetch him in, sir; fetch him in.

Boy.—It shall be done; it is not our fault, gentlemen.

(Exit.)

Wife.—Now we shall see fine doings, I warrant thee, George. Oh, here they come; how prettily the King of Cracovia's daughter is dressed!

Enter Ralph and the Lady, Squire and Dwarf.

Cit.—Ay, Nell, it is the fashion of that country, I warrant thee.

Lady.—Welcome, Sir Knight, unto my father's court,
King of Moldavia, unto me, Pompiona,
His daughter dear. But sure you do not like
Your entertainment, that will stay with us
No longer but a night.

Ralph.— Damsel right fair,
I am on many sad adventures bound,

That call me forth into the wilderness.
Besides, my horse's back is something gall'd,
Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.
But many thanks, fair lady, be to you,
For using errant knight with courtesy.

Lady.—But say, brave knight, what is your name and birth?

Ralph.—My name is Ralph. I am an Englishman,
As true as steel, a hearty Englishman,
And prentice to a grocer in the Strand,
By deed indent, of which I have one part:
But fortune calling me to follow arms,
On me this holy order I did take,
Of Burning Pestle, which in all men's eyes
I bear, confounding ladies' enemies.

Lady.—Oft have I heard of your brave countrymen,
And fertile soil, and store of wholesome food;
My father oft will tell me of a drink
In England found, and Nipitato call'd,
Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.

Ralph.—Lady, 'tis true; you need not lay your lips
To better Nipitato than there is.

Lady.—And of a wildfowl he will often speak,
Which powdered beef and mustard called is:
For there have been great wars 'twixt us and you;
But truly, Ralph, it was not long of me.
Tell me, then, Ralph, could you contented be
To wear a lady's favor in your shield?

Ralph.—I am a knight of a religious order,
And will not wear a favor of a lady
That trusts in Antichrist and false traditions.

Cit.—Well said, Ralph; convert her if thou canst.

Ralph.—Besides, I have a lady of my own
In merry England, for whose virtuous sake
I took these arms, and Susan is her name,
A cobbler's maid in Milk street, whom I vow
Ne'er to forsake whilst life and pestle last.

Lady.—Happy that cobbling dame, whose'er she be,
That for her own dear Ralph hath gotten thee.

Unhappy I, that ne'er shall see the day
To see thee more, that bear'st my heart away.

Ralph.—Lady, farewell; I must needs take my leave.

Lady.—Hard-hearted Ralph, that ladies dost deceive.

Cit.—Hark thee, Ralph, there's money for thee; give something in the King of Cracovia's house; be not beholding to him.

Ralph.—Lady, before I go, I must remember
Your father's officers, who, truth to tell,
Have been about me very diligent:
Hold up thy snowy hand, thou princely maid.
There's twelpence for your father's chamberlain,
And there's another shilling for his cook,
For, by my troth, the goose was roasted well.
And twelpence for your father's horse-keeper,
For 'nointing my horse back; and for his butler,
There is another shilling; to the maid
That wash'd my boot-hose, there's an English groat,
And twopence to the boy that wip'd my boots.
And last, fair lady, there is for yourself
Threepence to buy you pins at Bumbo Fair.

Lady.—Full many thanks, and I will keep them safe
Till all the heads be off, for thy sake, Ralph.

Ralph.—Advance, my squire and dwarf; I cannot stay.

Lady.—Thou kill'st my heart in parting thus away.

(Exeunt.)

Wife.—I commend Ralph yet, that he will not stoop to a Cracovian; there's properer women in London than any are there, I wis. But here comes Master Humphrey and his love again; now, George.

Cit.—Ay, bird, peace.

Enter Merchant, Humphrey, Luce and Boy.

Merchant.—Go, get you up; I will not be entreated.
And, gossip mine, I'll keep you sure hereafter
From gadding out again with boys and unthrifths;
Come, they are women's tears; I know your fashion.

Go, sirrah, lock her in, and keep the key

(Exeunt Luce and Boy.)

Safe as your life. Now, my son Humphrey,

You may both rest assuréd of my love

In this, and reap your own desire.

Humphrey.—I see this love you speak of, through your daughter,

Although the hole be little; and hereafter

Will yield the like in all I may or can,

Fitting a Christian and a gentleman.

Merch.—I do believe you, my good son, and thank you,

For 'twere an impudence to think you flattered.

Hum.—It were indeed, but shall I tell you why,

I have been beaten twice about the lie.

Merch.—Well, son, no more of compliment; my daughter

Is yours again: appoint the time and take her.

We'll have no stealing for it; I myself

And some few of our friends will see you married.

Hum.—I would you would, i'faith, for be it known,

I ever was afraid to lie alone.

Merch.—Some three days hence, then.

Hum.—Three days; let me see;

'Tis somewhat of the most, yet I agree,

Because I mean against the 'pointed day,

To visit all my friends in new array.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—Sir, there's a gentlewoman without would speak with your worship.

Merch.—What is she?

Serv.—Sir, I asked her not.

Merch.—Bid her come in.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought and Michael.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Peace be to your worship, I come as a poor suitor to you, sir, in the behalf of this child.

Merch.—Are you not wife to Merry-thought?

Mist. Mer.—Yes, truly; would I had ne'er seen his eyes; he has undone me and himself and his children, and there he lives at home and sings and hoits and revels among his drunken companions; but I warrant you, where to get a penny to put bread in his mouth he knows not. And therefore, if it like your worship, I would entreat your letter to the honest host of the Bell in Waltham, that I may place my child under the protection of his tapster, in some settled course of life.

Merch.—I'm glad the heav'ns have heard my prayers. Thy husband,

When I was ripe in sorrows, laughed at me;
Thy son, like an unthankful wretch, I having
Redeem'd him from his fall, and made him mine,
To show his love again, first stole my daughter,
Then wrong'd this gentleman, and last of all
Gave me that grief, had almost brought me down
Unto my grave, had not a stronger hand
Reliev'd my sorrows. Go, and weep as I did,
And be unpitied, for here I profess
An everlasting hate to all thy name.

Mist. Mer.—Will you so, sir, how say you by that? Come, Mick, let him keep his wind to cool his pottage; we'll go to thy nurse's, Mick; she knits silk stockings, boy; and we'll knit, too, boy, and be beholding to none of them all.

(Exeunt Michael and mother.)

Enter a Boy with a letter.

Boy.—Sir, I take it you are the master of this house.

Merch.—How then, boy?

Boy.—Then to yourself, sir, comes this letter.

Merch.—From whom, my pretty boy?

Boy.—From him that was your servant, but no more
Shall that name ever be, for he is dead.
Grief of your purchas'd anger broke his heart;
I saw him die, and from his hand receiv'd
This paper, with a charge to bring it hither;
Read it, and satisfy yourself in all.

LETTER.

Merch.—"Sir, that I have wronged your love I must confess, in which I have purchas'd to myself, besides mine own undoing, the ill opinion of my friends. Let not your anger, good sir, outlive me, but suffer me to rest in peace with your forgiveness; let my body (if a dying man may so much prevail with you) be brought to your daughter, that she may know my hot flames are now buried, and withal receive a testimony of the zeal I bore her virtue. Farewell forever, and be ever happy.

"JASPER."

God's hand is great in this; I do forgive him,
Yet am I glad he's quiet, where I hope
He will not bite again. Boy, bring the body,
And let him have his will, if that be all.

Boy.—'Tis here without, sir.

Merch.—So, sir, if you please,
You may conduct it in; I do not fear it.

Hum.—I'll be your usher, boy, for though I say it,
He ow'd me something once, and well did pay it.

(*Exeunt.*)

Enter Luce, alone.

Luce.—If there be any punishment inflicted
Upon the miserable, more than yet I feel,
Let it together seize me, and at once
Press down my soul; I cannot bear the pain
Of these delaying tortures. Thou that art
The end of all, and the sweet rest of all,
Come, come, O Death, and bring me to thy peace,
And blot out all the memory I nourish
Both of my father and my cruel friend.
Oh, wretched maid, still living to be wretched,
To be a say to Fortune in her changes,
And grow to number times and woes together.
How happy had I been, if, being born,
My grave had been my cradle!

Enter Servant.

Servant.—By your leave,
Young mistress, here's a boy hath brought a coffin,
What a would say I know not; but your father
Charg'd me to give you notice. Here they come.

Enter two bearing a coffin, Jasper in it.

Luce.—For me, I hope, 'tis come, and 'tis most welcome.

Boy.—Fair mistress, let me not add greater grief
To that great store you have already; Jasper
(That whilst he liv'd was yours, now's dead,
And here inclos'd) commanded me to bring
His body hither, and to crave a tear
From those fair eyes, though he deserv'd not pity,
To deck his funeral, for so he bid me
Tell her for whom he died.

Luce.—He shall have many. (Exeunt Coffin-carrier and Boy.)
Good friends, depart a little, whilst I take
My leave of this dead man, that once I lov'd:
Hold yet a little, life, and then I give thee
To thy first Heav'nly Being. O my friend!
Hast thou deceiv'd me thus, and got before me?
I shall not long be after, but believe me,
Thou wert too cruel, Jasper, 'gainst thyself,
In punishing the fault I could have pardon'd,
With so untimely death; thou didst not wrong me,
But ever wert most kind, most true, most loving:
And I the most unkind, most false, most cruel.
Didst thou but ask a tear? I'll give thee all,
Even all my eyes can pour down, all my sighs,
And all myself, before thou goest from me.
These are but sparing rites; but if thy soul
Be yet about this place, and can behold
And see what I prepare to deck thee with,
It shall go up, borne on the wings of peace,
And-satisfied. First will I sing thy dirge,
Then kiss thy pale lips, and then die myself,
And fill one coffin and one grave together.

SONG.

Come you whose loves are dead,
 And whilst I sing,
 Weep and wring
 Every hand, and every head
 Bind with cypress and sad yew;
 Ribbons black and candles blue,
 For him that was of men most true.

Come with heavy moaning,
 And on his grave
 Let him have
 Sacrifice of sighs and groaning;
 Let him have fair flowers enow,
 White and purple, green and yellow,
 For him that was of men most true.

Thou sable cloth, sad cover of my joys,
 I lift thee up, and thus I meet with death.

Jasper.—And thus you meet the living.

Luce.—Save me, heav'n!

Jasp.—Nay, do not fly me, fair, I am no spirit;
 Look better on me, do you know me yet?

Luce.—O thou dear shadow of my friend!

Jasp.—Dear substance,
 I swear I am no shadow; feel my hand;
 It is the same it was: I am your Jasper,
 Your Jasper that's yet living, and yet loving.
 Pardon my rash attempt, my foolish proof
 I put in practice of your constancy.
 For sooner should my sword have drunk my blood,
 And set my soul at liberty, than drawn
 The least drop from that body, for which boldness
 Doom me to anything; if death, I take it,
 And willingly.

Luce.— This death I'll give you for it:
 So, now I'm satisfied; you are no spirit,
 But my own truest, truest, truest friend,
 Why do you come thus to me?

Jasp.— First, to see you,
Then to convey you hence.

Luce.— It cannot be,
For I am lock'd up here, and watch'd at all hours,
That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

Jasp.—Nothing more possible: within this coffin
Do you convey yourself; let me alone,
I have the wits of twenty men about me,
Only I crave the shelter of your closet
A little, and then fear me not; creep in,
That they may presently convey you hence.
Fear nothing, dearest love; I'll be your second;
Lie close, so; all goes well yet. Boy!

Boy.—At hand, sir.

Jasp.—Convey away the coffin, and be wary.

Boy.—'Tis done already.

Jasp.—Now I must go conjure.

Enter Merchant.

Merchant.—Boy, boy!

Boy.—Your servant, sir.

Merch.—Do me this kindness, boy; hold, here's a crown:
before thou bury the body of this fellow, carry it to his old
merry father, and salute him from me, and bid him sing: he
hath cause.

Boy.—I will, sir.

Merch.—And then bring me word what tune he is in,
And have another crown; but do it truly.
I've fitted him a bargain, now, will vex him.

Boy.—God bless your worship's health, sir.

Merch.—Farewell, boy. (Exeunt.)

Enter Master Merry-thought.

Wife.—Ah, Old Merry-thought, art thou there again? Let's
hear some of thy songs.

Old Merry-thought.—"Who can sing a merrier note
Than he that cannot change a groat?"

Not a denier left, and yet my heart leaps; I do wonder yet, as old as I am, that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing and laugh and walk the streets. My wife and both my sons are I know not where; I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper, yet am I merry still; for I know I shall find it upon the table at six o'clock; therefore, hang thought.

"I would not be a serving-man
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer
The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master, too;
But I would eat and drink of the best,
And no work would I do."

This is it that keeps life and soul together—mirth. This is the philosopher's stone that they write so much on, that keeps a man ever young.

Enter a Boy.

Boy.—Sir, they say they know all your money is gone, and they will trust you for no more drink.

Old Mer.—Will they not? Let 'em choose. The best is, I have mirth at home, and need not send abroad for that. Let them keep their drink to themselves.

"For Jillian of Berry, she dwells on a hill,
And she hath good beer and ale to sell,
And of good fellows she thinks no ill,
And thither will we go now, now, now, and
thither will we go now.
And when you have made a little stay,
You need not know what is to pay,
But kiss your hostess and go your way,
And thither, etc."

Enter another Boy.

Second Boy.—Sir, I can get no bread for supper.

Old Mer.—Hang bread and supper. Let's preserve our mirth, and we shall never feel hunger, I'll warrant you; let's have a catch. Boy, follow me; come, sing this catch:

"Ho, ho, nobody at home,
 Meat, nor drink, nor money ha' we none;
 Fill the pot, Eedy,
 Never more need I."

So, boys, enough; follow me; let's change our place, and we shall laugh afresh. (Exeunt.)

Wife.—Let him go, George; a shall not have any countenance from us, not a good word from any i' th' company, if I may strike stroke in't.

Cit.—No more a sha'not, love; but, Nell, I will have Ralph do a very notable matter, now, to the eternal honor and glory of all grocers. Sirrah, you, there, boy, can none of you hear?

Boy.—Sir, your pleasure.

Cit.—Let Ralph come out on May-day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers, and his rings, and his knacks.

Boy.—Why, sir, you do not think of our plot; what will become of that, then?

Cit.—Why, sir, I care not what become on't. I'll have him come out, or I'll fetch him out myself; I'll have something done in honor of the city; besides, he hath been long enough upon adventures. Bring him out quickly, for I come amongst you—

Boy.—Well, sir, he shall come out; but if our play miscarry, sir, you are like to pay for't. (Exit.)

Cit.—Bring him away, then.

Wife.—This will be brave, i'faith. George, shall not he dance the morrice, too, for the credit of the Strand?

Cit.—No, sweetheart, it will be too much for the boy. Oh, there he is, Nell; he's reasonable well in repanel, but he has not rings enough.

Enter Ralph.

Ralph.—London, to thee I do present the merry month of May,
 Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say:
 For from the top of conduit head, as plainly may appear,
 I will both tell my name to you, and wherefore I came
 here.

My name is Ralph, by due descent, though not ignoble I,
Yet far inferior to the flock of gracious grocery.
And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,
With gilded staff, and crossed scarf, the May lord here I
stand.

Rejoice, O English hearts, rejoice; rejoice, O lovers dear;
Rejoice, O city, town and country; rejoice eke every shire;
For now the fragrant flowers do spring and sprout in
seemly sort,

The little birds do sit and sing, the lambs do make fine
sport;

And now the birchen tree doth bud that makes the
schoolboy cry,

The morrice rings while hobby-horse doth foot it featu-
ously:

The lords and ladies now abroad, for their disport and
play,

Do kiss sometimes upon the grass, and sometimes in the
hay.

Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to purge the
blood,

Fly Venus and Phlebotomy, for they are neither good.

Now little fish on tender stone begin to cast their bellies,
And sluggish snail, that erst were mew'd, do creep out
of their shellies.

The rumbling rivers now do warm, for little boys to
paddle,

The sturdy steed now goes to grass, and up they hang his
saddle.

The heavy hart, the blowing buck, the rascal and the
pricket,

Are now among the yeoman's peas, and leave the fearful
thicket.

And be like them, O you, I say, of this same noble town,
And lift aloft your velvet heads, and slipping of your
gown,

With bells on legs, and napkins clean unto your shoul-
ders tied,

With scarfs and garters as you please, and Hey for our
town! cried.

March out and show your willing minds, by twenty and
 by twenty,
 To Hogsdon or to Newington, where ale and cakes are
 plenty.
 And let it ne'er be said for shame, that we, the youths of
 London,
 Lay thrumming of our caps at home, and left our custom
 undone.
 Up, then, I say, both young and old, both man and maid
 a-maying,
 With drums and guns that bounce aloud, and merry tabor
 playing.
 Which to prolong, God save our king, and send his coun-
 try peace,
 And root out treason from the land; and so, my friends,
 I cease.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Merchant, alone.

Merchant.—I will have no great store of company at the
 wedding: a couple of neighbors and their wives; and we will
 have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow, and a good piece
 of beef stuck with rosemary.

Enter Jasper, with his face mealed.

Jasper.—Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.

Merch.—Heav'n bless me! Jasper!

Jasp.—Ay, I am his ghost,

Whom thou hast injur'd for his constant love:
 Fond worldly wretch, who dost not understand
 In death that true hearts cannot parted be.
 First know, thy daughter is quite borne away
 On wings of angels, through the liquid air
 Too far out of thy reach, and never more
 Shalt thou behold her face; but she and I
 Will in another world enjoy our loves,
 Where neither father's anger, poverty,
 Nor any cross that troubles earthly men,

Shall make us sever our united hearts.
 And never shalt thou sit, or be alone
 In any place, but I will visit thee
 With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
 The great offenses which thou didst to me.
 When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
 Merry in heart, and fill'd with swelling wine,
 I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
 Invisible to all men but thyself,
 And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear,
 Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
 And stand as mute and pale as death itself.

Merch.—Forgive me, Jasper! Oh! what might I do,
 Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost?

Jasp.—There is no means; too late thou think'st on this.

Merch.—But tell me what were best for me to do?

Jasp.—Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,
 And beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.

(Exit Jasper.)

Enter Humphrey.

Wife.—Look, George, his very ghost would have folks
 beaten.

Humphrey.—Father, my bride is gone, fair Mistress Luce.
 My soul's the font of vengeance, mischief's sluice.

Merch.—Hence, fool, out of my sight; with thy fond passion
 Thou hast undone me.

Hum.— Hold, my father dear,
 For Luce, thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

Merch.—Thy father, fool? There's some blows more; begone!

(Beats him.)

Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased
 To see thy will perform'd; now will I go
 To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs. (Exit.)

Hum.—What shall I do? I have been beaten twice,
 And Mistress Luce is gone. Help me, device:
 Since my true love is gone, I never more,
 Whilst I do live, upon the sky will pore;

But in the dark will wear out my shoe-soles
In passion, in St. Faith's Church under Paul's. (Exit.)

Wife.—George, call Ralph hither; if you love me, call Ralph hither. I have the bravest thing for him to do, George; prithee call him quickly.

Cit.—Ralph! why, Ralph, boy!

Enter Ralph.

Ralph.—Here, sir.

Cit.—Come hither, Ralph; come to thy mistress, boy.

Wife.—Ralph, I would have thee call all the youths together in battle-ray, with drums, and guns, and flags, and march to Mile End in pompous fashion, and there exhort your soldiers to be merry and wise, and to keep their beards from burning, Ralph; and then skirmish, and let your flags fly, and cry, Kill, kill, kill! My husband shall lend you his jerkin, Ralph, and there's a scarf; for the rest, the house shall furnish you, and we'll pay for't: do it bravely, Ralph, and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent.

Ralph.—I warrant you, mistress, if I do it not, for the honor of the city and the credit of my master, let me never hope for freedom.

Wife.—'Tis well spoken, i'faith; go thy ways; thou art a spark indeed.

Cit.—Ralph, double your files bravely, Ralph.

Ralph.—I warrant you, sir. (Exit Ralph.)

Cit.—Let him look narrowly to his service, I shall take him else; I was there myself a pikeman once, in the hottest of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet I thank God I am here.

(Drum within.)

Wife.—Hark, George, the drums!

Cit.—Ran, tan, tan, tan, ran tan. Oh, wench, an' thou hadst but seen little Ned of Aldgate, drum Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant, and then struck softly till the Ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go: "Sa, sa, sa," bounce quoth the guns; "Courage, my

hearts," quoth the captains; "St. George," quoth the pikemen; and withal here they lay, and there they lay; and yet for all this I am here, wench.

Wife.—Be thankful for it, George, for indeed 'tis wonderful.

Enter Ralph and his Company, with drums and colors.

Ralph.—March fair, my hearts; lieutenant, beat the rear up; ancient, let your colors fly; but have a great care of the butchers' hooks at Whitechapel, they have been the death of many a fair ancient. Open your filès, that I may take a view both of your persons and munition. Sergeant, call a muster.

Sergeant.—A stand. William Hamerton, pewterer.

Hamerton.—Here, captain.

Ralph.—A croslet and a Spanish pike; 'tis well; can you shake it with a terror?

Ham.—I hope so, captain.

Ralph.—Charge upon me—'tis with the weakest. Put more strength, William Hamerton, more strength. As you were again; proceed, sergeant.

Serg.—George Green-goose, poulterer.

Green-goose.—Here.

Ralph.—Let me see your piece, neighbor Green-goose. When was she shot in?

Green.—An' like you, master captain, I made a shot even now, partly to scour her, and partly for audacity.

Ralph.—It should seem so, certainly, for her breath is yet inflamed; besides, there is a main fault in the touch-hole—it stinketh. And I tell you moreover, and believe it, ten such touch-holes would poison the army; get you a feather, neighbor, get you a feather, sweet oil and paper, and your piece may do well enough yet. Where's your powder?

Green.—Here.

Ralph.—What, in a paper? As I am a soldier and a gentleman, it craves a martial court: you ought to die for't. Where's your horn? Answer me to that.

Green.—An't like you, sir, I was oblivious.

Ralph.—It likes me not it should be so; 'tis a shame for you, and a scandal to all our neighbors, being a man of worth and estimation, to leave your horn behind you: I am afraid 'twill breed example. But let me tell you no more on't; stand till I view you all. What's become o' th' nose of your flask?

First Soldier.—Indeed, la' captain, 'twas blown away with powder.

Ralph.—Put on a new one at the city's charge. Where's the flint of this piece?

Second Soldier.—The drummer took it out to light tobacco.

Ralph.—'Tis a fault, my friend; put it in again. You want a nose, and you a flint; sergeant, take a note on't, for I mean to stop it in their pay. Remove and march; soft and fair, gentlemen, soft and fair: double your files; as you were; faces about. Now you with the sodden face, keep in there: look to your match, sirrah, it will be in your fellow's flask anon. So make a crescent now, advance your pikes, stand and give ear. Gentlemen, countrymen, friends and my fellow-soldiers, I have brought you this day from the shop of security and the counters of content, to measure out in these furious fields honor by the ell and prowess by the pound. Let it not, oh, let it not, I say, be told hereafter, the noble issue of this city fainted; but bear yourselves in this fair action like men, valiant men, and free men. Fear not the face of the enemy nor the noise of the guns; for believe me, brethren, the rude rumbling of a brewer's car is more terrible, of which you have a daily experience: neither let the stink of powder offend you, since a more valiant stink is always with you. To a resolved mind his home is everywhere. I speak not this to take away the hope of your return; for you shall see (I do not doubt it), and that very shortly, your loving wives again, and your sweet children, whose care doth bear you company in baskets. Remember, then, whose cause you have in hand, and like a sort of true-born scavengers, scour me this famous realm of enemies. I have no more to say but this: Stand to your tacklings, lads, and show to the world you can as well brandish a sword as shake an apron. St. George, and on, my hearts!

Omnes.—St. George! St. George! (Exeunt.)

Wife.—'Twas well done, Ralph; I'll send thee a cold capon

afield, and a bottle of March beer; and, it may be, come myself to see thee.

Cit.—Nell, the boy hath deceived me much; I did not think it had been in him. He has perform'd such a matter, wench, that, if I live, next year I'll have him captain of the Gallifoist, or I'll want my will.

Enter Old Merry-thought.

Old Merry-thought.—Yet, I thank God, I break not a wrinkle more than I had; not a stoop, boys. Care, live with cats; I defy thee! My heart is as sound as an oak; and though I want drink to wet my whistle, I can sing,

“Come no more there, boys; come no more there:

For we shall never, whilst we live, come any more there.”

Enter a boy with a coffin.

Boy.—God save you, sir.

Old Mer.—It's a brave boy. Canst thou sing?

Boy.—Yes, sir, I can sing, but 'tis not so necessary at this time.

Old Mer.—“Sing we, and chant it,
While love doth grant it.”

Boy.—Sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you, you would have little list to sing.

Old Mer.—“Oh, the Mimon round,
Full long I have thee sought,
And now I have thee found,
And what hast thou here brought?”

Boy.—A coffin, sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

Old Mer.—Dead!

“Why farewell he:
Thou wast a bonny boy,
And I did love thee.”

Enter Jasper.

Jasper.—Then I pray you, sir, do so still.

Old Mer.—Jasper's ghost!

“Thou art welcome from Stygian lake so soon,

Declare to me what wondrous things
In Pluto's court are done."

Jasp.—By my troth, sir, I ne'er came there; 'tis too hot for me, sir.

Old Mer.—A merry ghost, a very merry ghost.
"And where is your true love? Oh, where is yours?"
Jasp.—Marry, look you, sir. (Heaves up the coffin.)

Old Mer.—Ah ha! Art thou good at that, i'faith?
"With hey trixie terlerie-whiskin,
The world it runs on wheels;
When the young man's frisking,
Up goes the maiden's heels."

Mistress Merry-thought and Michael, within.

Mistress Merry-thought.—What, Mr. Merry-thought, will you not let us in? What do you think shall become of us?

Old Mer.—What voice is that, that calleth at our door?

Mist. Mer.—You know me well enough; I am sure I have not been such a stranger to you.

Old Mer.—"And some they whistled, and some they sung,
Hey down, down;
And some did loudly say,
Ever as the Lord Barnet's horn blew,
Away, Musgrave, away."

Mist. Mer.—You will not have us starve here, will you, Master Merry-thought?

Jasp.—Nay, good sir, be persuaded; she is my mother. If her offenses have been great against you, let your own love remember she is yours, and so forgive her.

Luce.—Good Master Merry-thought, let me entreat you; I will not be denied.

Mist. Mer.—Why, Master Merry-thought, will you be a vexed thing still?

Old Mer.—Woman, I take you to my love again, but you shall sing before you enter; therefore dispatch your song, and so come in.

Mist. Mer.—Well, you must have your will, when all's done. Michael, what song canst thou sing, boy?

Michael.—I can sing none, forsooth, but "A Lady's Daughter of Paris," properly.

Mist. Mer.—(Song.) "It was a lady's daughter," etc.

Old Mer.—Come, you're welcome home again.

"If such danger be in playing,
And jest must to earnest turn,
You shall go no more a-Maying"—

Merchant.—(Within.) Are you within, Sir Master Merry-thought?

Jasp.—It is my master's voice, good sir; go hold him in talk while we convey ourselves into some inward room.

Old Mer.—What are you? Are you merry? You must be very merry if you enter.

Merch.—I am, sir.

Old Mer.—Sing, then.

Merch.—Nay, good sir, open to me.

Old Mer.—Sing, I say, or, by the merry heart, you come not in.

Merch.—Well, sir, I'll sing.

"Fortune my foe," etc.

Old Mer.—You are welcome, sir, you are welcome; you see your entertainment, pray you be merry.

Merch.—Oh, Master Merry-thought, I'm come to ask you
Forgiveness for the wrongs I offered you
And your most virtuous son; they're infinite,
Yet my contrition shall be more than they.
I do confess my hardness broke his heart,
For which just heav'n hath given me punishment
More than my age can carry; his wand'ring sprite,
Not yet at rest, pursues me everywhere,
Crying, I'll haunt thee for thy cruelty.
My daughter she is gone, I know not how,
Taken invisible, and whether living
Or in grave, 'tis yet uncertain to me.
Oh, Master Merry-thought, these are the weights
Will sink me to my grave. Forgive me, sir.

Old Mer.—Why, sir, I do forgive you, and be merry.
 And if the wag in's lifetime play'd the knave,
 Can you forgive him, too?

Merch.— With all my heart, sir.

Old Mer.—Speak it again, and heartily.

Merch.— I do, sir.

Now, by my soul, I do.

Old Mer.—"With that came out his paramour,
 She was as white as the lily flower,
 Hey troul, troly loly.
 With that came out her own dear knight,
 He was as true as ever did fight," etc.

Enter Luce and Jasper.

Sir, if you will forgive 'em, clap their hands together; there's no more to be said i' th' matter.

Merch.—I do, I do!

Cit.—I do not like this. Peace, boys; hear me, one of you. Everybody's part is come to an end but Ralph's and he's left out.

Boy.—'Tis long of yourself, sir; we have nothing to do with his part.

Cit.—Ralph, come away; make on him as you have done of the rest; boys, come.

Wife.—Now, good husband, let him come out and die.

Cit.—He shall, Nell; Ralph, come away quickly and die, boy.

Boy.—'Twill be very unfit he should die, sir, upon no occasion, and in a comedy, too.

Cit.—Take you no care for that, Sir Boy; is not his part at an end, think you, when he's dead? Come away, Ralph.

Enter Ralph with a forked arrow through his head.

Ralph.—When I was mortal, this my costive corpse
 Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand,
 Where sitting, I espied a lovely dame,
 Whose master wrought with lingel and with awl,

And underground he vampéd many a boot.
Straight did her love prick forth me, tender sprig,
To follow feats of arms in warlike wise,
Through Waltham Desert; where I did perform
Many achievements, and did lay on ground
Huge Barbaroso, that insulting giant,
And all his captives soon set at liberty.
Then honor prick'd me from my native soil
Into Moldavia, where I gain'd the love
Of Pompiana, his beloved daughter;
But yet prov'd constant to the black-thumbed maid
Susan, and scornéd Pompiana's love.
Yet liberal I was, and gave her pins,
And money for her father's officers.
I then returnéd home, and thrust myself
In action, and by all men chosen was
The Lord of May, where I did flourish it
With scarfs and rings, and posy in my hand.
After this action I preferred was,
And chosen City Captain at Mile End,
With hat and feather, and with leading staff,
And train'd my men, and brought them all off clean,
Save one man, that berayed him with the noise.
But all these things I, Ralph, did undertake
Only for my belovéd Susan's sake.
Then coming home, and sitting in my shop,
With apron blue, Death came unto my stall
To cheapen aquavitæ, but ere I
Could take the bottle down and fill a taste,
Death caught a pound of pepper in his hand,
And sprinkled all my face and body o'er,
And in an instant vanishéd away.

Cit.—'Tis a pretty fiction, i'faith.

Ralph.—Then took I up my bow and shaft in hand,
And walkéd in Moorfields to cool myself;
But there grim cruel Death met me again,
And shot his forkéd arrow through my head,
And now I faint; therefore be warn'd by me,
My fellows every one, of forkéd heads.
Farewell, all you good boys in merry London,

Ne'er shall we more upon Shrove Tuesday meet,
 And pluck down houses of iniquity.
 My pain increaseth: I shall never more
 When clubs are cried be brisk upon my legs,
 Nor daub a satin gown with rotten eggs
 Set up a stake, oh, never more I shall;
 I die! Fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers Hall! Oh, oh, oh, etc

Wife.—Well said, Ralph; do your obeisance to the gentlemen, and go your ways. Well said, Ralph. (Exit Ralph.)

Old Mer.—Methinks all we, thus kindly and unexpectedly reconciled, should not part without a song.

Merch.—A good motion.

Old Mer.—Strike up, then.

SONG.

Better music ne'er was known
 Than a choir of hearts in one.
 Let each other, that hath been
 Troubled with the gall or spleen,
 Learn of us to keep his brow
 Smooth and plain, as yours are now.
 Sing though before the hour of dying,
 He shall rise, and then be crying
 Heigho! 'tis naught but mirth
 That keeps the body from the earth.
 (Exeunt omnes.)

EPILOGUE.

Cit.—Come, Nell, shall we go? The play's done.

Wife.—Nay, by my faith, George, I have more manners than so. I'll speak to these gentlemen first. I thank you all, gentlemen, for your patience and countenance to Ralph, a poor fatherless child, and if I may see you at my house, it should go hard but I would have a pottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco for you; for truly I hope you like the youth, but I would be glad to know the truth. I refer it to your own discretions whether you will applaud him or no, for I will wink, and whilst, you shall do what you will. I thank you with all my heart. God give you good-night. Come, George,

DOUGLAS

A TRAGEDY

BY THE

REV. JOHN HOME, D.D.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DOUGLAS.

LORD RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON.

OLD NORVAL.

YOUNG NORVAL.

OFFICER.

SERVANT.

LADY RANDOLPH.

ANNA.

PRELUDE.

The tragedy of *Douglas* was suggested to Home through hearing a lady sing the ballad of Gil Morice. It was for the author a five years' task, and finally was rejected by Garrick, to whom it was submitted for his opinion. It was, however, brought out in Edinburgh, where it scored a remarkable success. Home was tried and suspended by the Presbyterian Synod of the Kirk of Scotland for having written "a profane stage play," though one of the most natural and powerful dramas of the period. It was afterward enthusiastically received in England, and is perhaps the nearest approach to the tragedy of the Romantic school that Britain has produced, except for a few of Tennyson's and Byron's plays. It is, however, rather a dramatic poem than a drama, and hence rather fitted for the study than the stage.

ACT I.

The court of a castle surrounded with woods.

Enter Lady Randolph.

Lady Randolph.—Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart,
Farewell a while; I will not leave you long;

For in your shades I deem some spirit dwells,
 Who from the chiding stream, or groaning oak,
 Still hears, and answers to Matilda's moan.
 O Douglas! Douglas! if departed ghosts
 Are e'er permitted to review this world,
 Within the circle of that wood thou art,
 And with the passion of immortals hear'st
 My lamentation: hear'st thy wretched wife
 Weep for her husband slain, her infant lost.
 My brother's timeless death I seem to mourn;
 Who perish'd with thee on this fatal day.
 To thee I lift my voice; to thee address
 The plaint which mortal ear has never heard.
 O disregard me not; tho' I am call'd
 Another's now, my heart is wholly thine.
 Incapable of change, affection lies
 Buried, my Douglas, in thy bloody grave.
 But Randolph comes, whom fate has made my Lord,
 To chide my anguish, and defraud the dead.

Enter Lord Randolph.

Lord Randolph.—Again these weeds of woe! say, dost thou
 well

To feed a passion which consumes thy life?
 The living claim some duty; vainly thou
 Bestow'st thy cares upon the silent dead.

Lady Rand.—Silent, alas! is he for whom I mourn:
 Childless, without memorial of his name,
 He only now in my remembrance lives.
 This fatal day stirs my time-settled sorrow,
 Troubles afresh the fountain of my heart.

Lord Rand.—When was it pure of sadness! These black weeds
 Express the wonted color of thy mind,
 For ever dark and dismal. Seven long years
 Are pass'd, since we were join'd by sacred ties:
 Clouds all the while have hung upon thy brow,
 Nor broke, nor parted by one gleam of joy.
 Time, that wears out the trace of deepest anguish,
 As the sea smooths the prints made in the sand,
 Has passed o'er thee in vain.

Lady Rand.—If time to come

Should prove as ineffectual, yet, my Lord,
Thou canst not blame me. When our Scottish youth
Vied with each other for my luckless love,
Oft I besought them, I implor'd them all
Not to assail me with my father's aid,
Nor blend their better destiny with mine.
For melancholy had congeal'd my blood,
And froze affection in my chilly breast.
At last my Sire, rous'd with the base attempt
To force me from him, which thou rend'red'st vain,
To his own daughter bow'd his hoary head,
Besought me to commiserate his age,
And vow'd he should not, could not die in peace,
Unless he saw me wedded, and secur'd
From violence and outrage. Then, my Lord!
In my extreme distress I call'd on thee,
Thee I bespake, profess'd my strong desire
To lead a single, solitary life,
And begg'd thy Nobleness not to demand
Her for a wife whose heart was dead to love.
How thou persisted'st after this, thou know'st.
And must confess that I am not unjust,
Nor more to thee than to myself injurious.

Lord Rand.—That I confess; yet ever must regret

The grief I cannot cure. Would thou wert not
Compos'd of grief and tenderness alone,
But hadst a spark of other passions in thee,
Pride, anger, vanity, the strong desire
Of admiration, dear to woman-kind;
These might contend with, and allay thy grief,
As meeting tides and currents smooth our firth.

Lady Rand.—To such a cause the human mind oft owes
Its transient calm, a calm I envy not.

Lord Rand.—Sure thou art not the daughter of Sir Malcolm:

Strong was his rage, eternal his resentment:
For when thy brother fell, he smil'd to hear
That Douglas' son in the same field was slain.

Lady Rand.—Oh! rake not up the ashes of my fathers.
Implacable resentment was their crime,

And grievous has the expiation been.
Contending with the Douglas, gallant lives
Of either house were lost; my ancestors
Compell'd, at last, to leave their ancient seat
On Tiviot's pleasant banks; and now, of them
No heir is left. Had they not been so stern,
I had not been the last of all my race.

Lord Rand.—Thy grief wrests to its purposes my words
I never ask'd of thee that ardent love,
Which in the breasts of fancy's children burns.
Decent affection, and complacent kindness
Were all I wish'd for; but I wish'd in vain.
Hence with the less regret my eyes behold
The storm of war that gathers o'er this land.
If I should perish by the Danish sword,
Matilda would not shed one tear the more.

Lady Rand.—Thou dost not think so: woeful as I am,
I love thy merit, and esteem thy virtues.
But whither go'st thou now?

Lord Rand.—Straight to the camp,
Where every warrior on the tip-toe stands
Of expectation, and impatient asks
Each who arrives, if he is come to tell
The Danes are landed.

Lady Rand.—O, may adverse winds,
Far from the coast of Scotland, drive their fleet!
And every soldier of both hosts return
In peace and safety to his pleasant home!

Lord Rand.—Thou speak'st a woman's, hear a warrior's wish:
Right from their native land, the stormy north,
May the wind blow, till every keel is fix'd
Immovable in Caledonia's strand!
Then shall our foes repent their bold invasion,
And roving armies shun the fatal shore.

Lady Rand.—War I detest: but war with foreign foes,
Whose manners, language, and whose looks are strange,
Is not so horrid, nor to me so hateful,
As that with which our neighbors oft we wage.
A river here, there an ideal line,

By fancy drawn, divides the sister kingdoms.
On each side dwells a people similar,
As twins are to each other; valiant both;
Both for their valor famous through the world.
Yet will they not unite their kindred arms,
And, if they must have war, wage distant war,
But with each other fight in cruel conflict.
Gallant in strife, and noble in their ire,
The battle is their pastime. They go forth
Gay in the morning, as to summer sport;
When ev'ning comes, the glory of the morn,
The youthful warrior is a clod of clay.
Thus fall the prime of either hapless land;
And such the fruit of Scotch and English wars.

Lord Rand.—I'll hear no more: this melody would make
A soldier drop his sword, and doff his arms,
Sit down and weep the conquests he has made;
Yea, (like a monk,) sing rest and peace in heaven
To souls of warriors in their battles slain.
Lady, farewell: I leave thee not alone;
Yonder comes one whose love makes duty light. (Exit.)

Enter Anna.

Anna.—Forgive the rashness of your Anna's love:
Urg'd by affection, I have thus presum'd
To interrupt your solitary thoughts;
And warn you of the hours that you neglect,
And lose in sadness.

Lady Rand.—So to lose my hours
Is all the use I wish to make of time.

Anna.—To blame thee, Lady, suits not with my state,
But sure I am, since death first prey'd on man,
Never did sister thus a brother mourn.
What had your sorrows been if you had lost,
In early youth, the husband of your heart?

Lady Rand.—Oh!

Anna.—Have I distress'd you with officious love,
And ill-tim'd mention of your brother's fate?
Forgive me, Lady: humble tho' I am,

The mind I bear partakes not of my fortune:
So fervently I love you, that to dry
These piteous tears, I'd throw my life away.

Lady Rand.—What power directed thy unconscious tongue
To speak as thou hast done? to name——

Anna.—I know not:

But since my words have made my mistress tremble
I will speak so no more; but silent mix
My tears with her's.

Lady Rand.—No, thou shalt not be silent.
I'll trust thy faithful love, and thou shalt be
Henceforth th' instructed partner of my woes.
But what avails it? Can thy feeble pity
Roll back the flood of never-ebbing time?
Compel the earth and ocean to give up
Their dead alive?

Anna.—What means my noble mistress?

Lady Rand.—Didst thou not ask what had my sorrows
been?——

If I in early youth had lost a husband?——
In the cold bosom of the earth is lodg'd,
Mangled with wounds, the husband of my youth;
And in some cavern of the ocean lies
My child and his.——

Anna.—O! Lady, most rever'd!

The tale wrapt up in your amazing words
Deign to unfold.

Lady Rand.—Alas, an ancient feud,
Hereditary evil, was the source
Of my misfortunes. Ruling fate decreed,
That my brave brother should in battle save
The life of Douglas' son, our house's foe:
The youthful warriors vow'd eternal friendship.
To see the vaunted sister of his friend
Impatient Douglas to Balarmo came,
Under a borrow'd name.——My heart he gain'd;
Nor did I long refuse the hand he begg'd:
My brother's presence autoriz'd our marriage.
Three weeks, three little weeks, with wings of down,

Had o'er us flown, when my lov'd Lord was called
 To fight his father's battles; and with him,
 In spite of all my tears, did Malcolm go.
 Scarce were they gone, when my stern Sire was told
 That the false stranger was Lord Douglas' son.
 Frantic with rage, the Baron drew his sword,
 And question'd me. Alone, forsaken, faint,
 Kneeling beneath his sword, fault'ring i took
 An oath equivocal, that I ne'er would
 Wed one of Douglas' name. Sincerity,
 Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
 Thy onward path! altho' the earth should gap,
 And from the gulf of hell destruction cry
 To take dissimulation's winding way.

Anna.—Alas! how few of woman's fearful kind
 Durst own a truth so hardy!

Lady Rand.—The first truth
 Is easiest to avow. This moral learn,
 This precious moral—from my tragic tale——
 In a few days the dreadful tidings came
 That Douglas and my brother both were slain.
 My lord! my life! my husband!——Mighty heaven!
 What had I done to merit such affliction?

Anna.—My dearest Lady! many a tale of tears
 I've listen'd to; but never did I hear
 A tale so sad as this.

Lady Rand.—In the first days
 Of my distracting grief, I found myself——
 As woman wish to be who love their lords.
 But who durst tell my father? The good priest
 Who join'd our hands, my brother's ancient tutor,
 With his lov'd Malcolm in the battle fell:
 They two alone were privy to the marriage.
 On silence and concealment I resolved,
 Till time should make my father's fortune mine.
 That very night on which my son was born,
 My nurse, the only confident I had,
 Set out with him to reach her sister's house:
 But nurse, nor infant, have I ever seen

Or heard of, Anna, since that fatal hour.
My murder'd child!—had thy fond mother fear'd
The loss of thee, she had loud fame defy'd,
Despis'd her father's rage, her father's grief,
And wander'd with thee thro' the scorning world.

Anna.—Not seen nor heard of! then perhaps he lives.

Lady Rand.—No. It was dark December: wind and rain
Had beat all night. Across the Carron lay
The destin'd road; and in its swelling flood
My faithful servant perish'd with my child.
O hapless son! of a most hapless sire!—
But they are both at rest; and I alone
Dwell in this world of woe, condemn'd to walk,
Like a guilt-troubl'd ghost, my painful rounds:
Nor has despitiful fate permitted me
The comfort of a solitary sorrow.
Tho' dead to love, I was compell'd to wed
Randolph, who snatch'd me from a villain's arms;
And Randolph now possesses the domains
That by Sir Malcolm's death on me devolv'd;
Domains, that should to Douglas' son have giv'n
A Baron's title, and a Baron's power.
Such were my soothing thoughts, while I bewail'd
The slaughter'd father of a son unborn.
And when that son came, like a ray from heav'n
Which shines and disappears; alas! my child!
How long did thy fond mother grasp the hope
Of having thee, she knew not how, restor'd.
Year after year hath worn her hope away;
But left still undiminish'd her desire.

Anna.—The hand, that spins th' uneven thread of life,
May smooth the length that's yet to come of yours.

Lady Rand.—Not in this world: I have consider'd well
Its various evils, and on whom they fall.
Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe!
O! had I died when my lov'd husband fell!
Had some good angel op'd to me the book
Of providence, and let me read my life,

My heart had broke when I beheld the sum
Of ills, which one by one I have endur'd.

Anna.—That power, whose ministers good angels are,
Hath shut the book in mercy to mankind.
But we must leave this theme: Glenalvon comes.
I saw him bend on you his thoughtful eyes,
And hitherwards he slowly stalks his way.

Lady Rand.—I will avoid him. An ungracious person
Is doubly irksome in an hour like this.

Anna.—Why speaks my Lady thus of Randolph's heir?

Lady Rand.—Because he's not the heir of Randolph's virtues.
Subtle and shrewd, he offers to mankind
An artificial image of himself:
And he with ease can vary to the taste
Of different men, its features. Self-deny'd,
And master of his appetites he seems:
But his fierce nature, like a fox chain'd up,
Watches to seize unseen the wish'd-for prey.
Never were vice and virtue pois'd so ill,
As in Glenalvon's unrelenting mind.
Yet is he brave and politic in war,
And stands aloft in these unruly times.
Why I describe him thus I'll tell hereafter:
Stay and detain him till I reach the castle. (Exit.)

Anna.—O happiness! where art thou to be found?
I see thou dwellest not with birth and beauty,
Tho' grac'd with grandeur, and in wealth array'd:
Nor dost thou, it would seem, with virtue dwell;
Else had this gentle Lady miss'd thee not.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glenalvon.—What dost thou muse on, meditating maid?
Like some entranc'd and visionary seer
On earth thou stand'st, thy thoughts ascend to heaven.

Anna.—Would that I were, e'en as thou say'st, a seer,
To have my doubts by heav'nly vision clear'd!

Glen.—What dost thou doubt of? what hast thou to do
With subjects intricate? Thy youth, thy beauty,

Cannot be question'd: think of these good gifts,
And then thy contemplations will be pleasing.

Anna.—Let women view yon monuments of woe,
Then boast of beauty: who so fair as she?
But I must follow; this revolving day
Awakes the memory of her ancient woes. (Exit.)

Glen.—So! Lady Randolph shuns me! by and by
I'll woo her as the lion woos his brides.
The deed's a-doing now, that makes me lord
Of these rich valleys, and a chief of power.
The season is most apt; my sounding steps
Will not be heard amidst the din of arms.
Randolph has liv'd too long; his better fate
Had the ascendant once, and kept me down:
When I had seiz'd the dame, by chance he came,
Rescu'd, and had the lady for his labor;
I 'scap'd unknown: a slender consolation!
Heaven is my witness that I do not love
To sow in peril, and let others reap
The jocund harvest. Yet I am not safe:
By love, or something like it, stung, inflam'd,
Madly I blabb'd my passion to his wife,
And she has threaten'd to acquaint him of it.
The way of woman's will I do not know:
But well I know the baron's wrath is deadly.
I will not live in fear; the man I dread
Is as a Dane to me; he is the man
Who stands betwixt me and my chief desire.
No bar but he: she has no kinsman near;
No brother in his sister's quarrel bold,
And for the righteous cause, a stranger's cause,
I know no chief that will defy Glenalvon.

ACT II.

A court, etc.

Stranger.—(Within.) Oh, mercy, mercy!

Enter servants and a Stranger at one door, and Lady Randolph and Anna at another.

Lady Randolph.—What means this clamor? Stranger, speak secure;

Hast thou been wronged? have these rude men presum'd
To vex the weary traveller on his way?

First Servant.—By us no stranger ever suffer'd wrong:

This man with outcry wild has call'd us forth;
So sore afraid he cannot speak his fears.

Enter Lord Randolph and Norval, with their swords drawn and bloody.

Lady Rand.—Not vain the stranger's fears! how fares my lord?

Lord Randolph.—That it fares well, thanks to this gallant youth,

Whose valor sav'd me from a wretched death!
As down the winding dale I walk'd alone,
At the crossway four armed men attack'd me:
Rovers, I judge, from the licentious camp,
Who would have quickly laid Lord Randolph low,
Had not this brave and generous stranger come,
Like my good angel, in the hour of fate,
And, mocking danger, made my foes his own.
They turn'd upon him: but his active arm
Struck to the ground, from whence they rose no more,
The fiercest two; the others fled amain,
And left him master of the bloody field.
Speak, Lady Randolph: upon beauty's tongue
Dwell accents pleasing to the brave and bold.
Speak, noble dame, and thank him for thy lord.

Lady Rand.—My lord, I cannot speak what now I feel.

My heart o'erflows with gratitude to heav'n,
And to this noble youth, who, all unknown
To you and yours, deliberated not,
Nor paus'd at peril, but, humanely brave,
Fought on your side, against such fearful odds.
Have you yet learn'd of him, whom we should thank?
Whom call the savior of Lord Randolph's life?

Lord Rand.—I ask'd that question, and he answer'd not:
But I must know who my deliverer is. (To the stranger.)

Norval.—A low-born man, of parentage obscure,
Who naught can boast but his desire to be
A soldier, and to gain a name in arms.

Lord Rand.—Whoe'er thou art, thy spirit is ennobled
By the great King of kings! thou art ordain'd
And stamp'd a hero by the sovereign hand
Of nature! blush not, flower of modesty
As well as valor, to declare thy birth.

Norv.—My name is Norval: on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks; a frugal swain,
Whose constant cares were to increase his store,
And keep his only son, myself, at home.
For I had heard of battles, and I long'd
To follow to the field some warlike lord:
And heaven soon granted what my sire denied.
This moon which rose last night, round as my shield,
Had not yet fill'd her horns, when, by her light,
A band of fierce barbarians, from the hills,
Rush'd like a torrent down upon the vale,
Sweeping our flocks and herds. The shepherds fled
For safety and for succor. I alone,
With bended bow, and quiver full of arrows,
Hover'd about the enemy, and mark'd
The road he took, then hasted to my friends;
Whom, with a troop of fifty chosen men,
I met advancing. The pursuit I led,
Till we o'ertook the spoil-encumber'd foe.
We fought and conquer'd. Ere a sword was drawn
An arrow from my bow had pierc'd their chief,
Who wore that day the arms which now I wear.
Returning home in triumph, I disdain'd
The shepherd's slothful life: and having heard
That our good king had summon'd his bold peers
To lead their warriors to the Carron side,
I left my father's house, and took with me
A chosen servant to conduct my steps;
Yon trembling coward, who forsook his master,

Journeying with this intent, I passed these towers,
And, heaven-directed, came this day to do
The happy deed that gilds my humble name.

Lord Rand.—He is as wise as brave. Was ever tale
With such a gallant modesty rehears'd?
My brave deliverer! thou shalt enter now
A nobler list, and in a monarch's fight
Contend with princes for the prize of fame.
I will present thee to our Scottish king,
Whose valiant spirit ever valor lov'd.
Ha! my Matilda! wherefore starts that tear?

Lady Rand.—I cannot say: for various affections,
And strangely mingled, in my bosom swell;
Yet each of them may well command a tear.
I joy that thou art safe, and I admire
Him and his fortunes who hath wrought thy safety:
Yea, as my mind predicts, with thine his own.
Obscure and friendless, he the army fought,
Bent upon peril, in the range of death
Resolv'd to hunt for fame, and with his sword
To gain distinction which his birth denied.
In this attempt unknown he might have perish'd,
And gain'd, with all his valor, but oblivion.
Now grac'd by thee, his virtue serves no more
Beneath despair. The soldier now of hope
He stands conspicuous; fame and great renown
Are brought within the compass of his sword.
On this my mind reflected while you spoke,
And bless'd the wonder-working hand of heaven.

Lord Rand.—Pious and grateful ever are thy thoughts!
My deeds shall follow where thou point'st the way.
Next to myself, and equal to Glenalvon,
In honor and command shall Norval be.

Norv.—I know not how to thank you. Rude I am
In speech and manners: never till this hour
Stood I in such a presence: yet, my lord,
There's something in my breast which makes me bold
To say, that Norval ne'er will shame thy favor.

Lady Rand.—I will be sworn thou wilt not. Thou shalt be
My knight; and ever, as thou didst to-day,
With happy valor guard the life of Randolph.

Lord Rand.—Well hast thou spoke. Let me forbid reply.

(To Norval.)

We are thy debtors still; thy high desert
O'ertops our gratitude. I must proceed,
As was at first intended, to the camp.
Some of my train, I see, are speeding hither,
Impatient, doubtless, of their lord's delay.
Go with me, Norval, and thine eyes shall see
The chosen warriors of thy native land,
Who languish for the fight, and beat the air
With brandish'd swords.

Norv.—Let us be gone, my lord.

Lord Rand.—(To Lady Randolph.) About the time that the declining sun

Shall his broad orbit o'er yon hills suspend,
Expect us to return. This night once more
Within these walls I rest; my tent I pitch
To-morrow in the field. Prepare the feast.
Free is his heart who for his country fights;
He in the eve of battle may resign
Himself to social pleasure; sweetest then,
When danger to a soldier's soul endears
The human joy that never may return.

(Exeunt Lord Randolph and Norval.)

Lady Rand.—His parting words have struck a fatal truth.
O Douglas! Douglas! tender was the time
When we two parted, ne'er to meet again!
How many years of anguish and despair
Has heav'n annex'd to those swift-passing hours
Of love and fondness! Then my bosom's flame
Oft, as blown back by the rude breath of fear,
Return'd, and with redoubled ardor blaz'd.

Anna.—May gracious heav'n pour the sweet balm of peace
Into the wounds that fester in your breast!
For earthly consolation cannot cure them.

Lady Rand.—One only cure can heaven itself bestow:

A grave—that bed in which the weary rest.
Wretch that I am! Alas! why am I so?
At every happy parent I repine!
How blest the mother of young gallant Norval!
She for a living husband bore her pains,
And heard him bless her when a man was born.
She nurs'd her smiling infant on her breast;
Tended the child, and rear'd the pleasing boy:
She, with affection's triumph, saw the youth
In grace and comeliness surpass his peers:
While I to a dead husband bore a son,
And to the roaring waters gave my child.

Anna.—Alas! alas! why will you thus resume
Your grief afresh? I thought that gallant youth
Would for a while have won you from your woe.
On him intent you gazed, with a look
Much more delighted than your pensive eye
Has deign'd on other objects to bestow.

Lady Rand.—Delighted, say'st thou? Oh! even there mine eye
Found fuel for my life-consuming sorrow.
I thought that, had the son of Douglas liv'd,
He might have been like this young gallant stranger,
And pair'd with him in features and in shape;
In all endowments, as in years, I deem,
My boy with blooming Norval might have number'd.
While thus I mus'd, a spark from fancy fell
On my sad heart, and kindled up a fondness
For this young stranger, wand'ring from his home,
And like an orphan cast upon my care.
I will protect thee (said I to myself)
With all my power, and grace with all my favor.

Anna.—Sure heav'n will bless so generous a resolve.
You must, my noble dame, exert your power:
You must awake: devices will be fram'd,
And arrows pointed at the breast of Norval.

Lady Rand.—Glenalvon's false and crafty head will work
Against a rival in his kinsman's love,
If I deter him not: I only can.

Bold as he is, Glenalvon will beware
 How he pulls down the fabric that I raise.
 I'll be the artist of young Norval's fortune.
 'Tis pleasing to admire! most apt was I
 To this affection in my better days;
 Tho' now I seem to you shrunk up, retir'd
 Within the narrow compass of my woe.
 Have you not sometimes seen an early flower
 Open its bud, and spread its silken leaves,
 To catch sweet airs, and odors to bestow;
 Then, by the keen blast nipp'd, pull in its leaves,
 And, tho' still living, die to scent and beauty?
 Emblem of me: affliction, like a storm,
 Hath kill'd the forward blossom of my heart.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glenalvon.—Where is my dearest kinsman, noble Randolph?

Lady Rand.—Have you not heard, Glenalvon, of the base—

Glen.—I have; and that the villains may not 'scape,
 With a strong band I have begirt the wood.
 If they lurk there, alive they shall be taken,
 And torture force from them th' important secret,
 Whether some foe of Randolph hir'd their swords,
 Or if—

Lady Rand.—That care becomes a kinsman's love.
 I have a counsel for Glenalvon's ear. (Exit Anna.)

Glen.—To him your counsels always are commands.

Lady Rand.—I have not found so: thou art known to me.

Glen.—Known!

Lady Rand.—And most certain is my cause of knowledge.

Glen.—What do you know? By heav'n
 You much amaze me. No created being,
 Yourself except, durst thus accost Glenalvon.

Lady Rand.—Is guilt so bold! and dost thou make a merit
 Of thy pretended meekness! This to me,
 Who, with a gentleness which duty blames,
 Have hitherto conceal'd what, if divulg'd,
 Would make thee nothing; or, what's worse than that,

An outcast beggar, and unpitied, too!
For mortals shudder at a crime like *thine*.

Glen.—Thy virtue awes me. First of womankind!
Permit me yet to say, that the fond man
Whom love transports beyond strict virtue's bounds,
If he is brought by love to misery,
In fortune ruin'd, as in mind forlorn,
Unpitied cannot be. Pity's the alms
Which on such beggars freely is bestow'd:
For mortals know that love is still their lord,
And o'er their vain resolves advances still:
As fire, when kindled by our shepherds, moves
Thro' the dry heath against the fanning wind.

Lady Rand.—Reserve these accents for some other ear:
To love's apology I listen not.
Mark thou my words; for it is meet thou should'st.
His brave deliverer Randolph here retains.
Perhaps his presence may not please thee well:
But, at thy peril, practice aught against him:
Let not thy jealousy attempt to shake
And loosen the good root he has in Randolph;
Whose favorites, I know, thou hast supplanted.
Thou look'st at me as if thou fain would'st pry
Into my heart. 'Tis open as my speech.
I give this early caution, and put on
The curb before thy temper breaks away.
The friendless stranger my protection claims:
His friend I am, and be not thou his foe. (Exit.)

Glen.—Child that I was, to start at my own shadow,
And be the shallow fool of coward conscience!
I am not what I have been; what I should be.
The darts of destiny have almost pierc'd
My marble heart. Had I one grain of faith
In holy legends and religious tales,
I should conclude there was an arm above,
That fought against me, and malignant turn'd,
To catch myself, the subtle snare I set.
Why, rape and murder are not simple means!
Th' imperfect rape to Randolph gave a spouse;

And the intended murder introduc'd
 A favorite to hide the sun from me;
 And, worst of all, a rival. Burning hell!
 This were thy centre, if I thought she lov'd him!
 'Tis certain she contemns me! nay, commands me,
 And waves the flag of her displeasure o'er me,
 In his behalf. And shall I thus be brav'd?
 Curb'd, as she calls it, by dame chastity?
 Infernal fiends, if any fiends there are
 More fierce than hate, ambition and revenge,
 Rise up and fill thy bosom with your fires
 And policy remorseless! Chance may spoil
 A single aim; but perseverance must
 Prosper at last. For chance and fate are words
 Persistent wisdom is the fate of man.
 Darkly a project peers upon my mind,
 Like the red moon when rising in the east,
 Cross'd and divided by strange color'd clouds.
 I'll seek the slave who came with Norval hither,
 And for his cowardice was spurned from him.
 I've known a follower's rankled bosom breed
 Venom most fatal to his heedless Lord. (Exit.)

ACT III.

A court, etc., as before.

Enter Anna.

Anna.—Thy vassals, Grief! great nature's order break,
 And change the noontide to the midnight hour.
 While Lady Randolph sleeps, I will walk forth,
 And taste the air that breathes on yonder bank.
 Sweet may her slumbers be! Ye ministers
 Of gracious heaven who love the human race,
 Angels and seraphs who delight in goodness!
 Forsake your skies, and to her couch descend!
 There from her fancy chase those dismal forms
 That haunt her waking; her sad spirit charm
 With images celestial, such as please
 The bless'd above upon their golden beds.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—One of the vile assassins is secur'd.
We found the villain lurking in the wood;
With dreadful imprecations he denies
All knowledge of the crime. But this is not
His first essay: these jewels were conceal'd
In the most secret places of his garment;
Belike the spoils of some that he has murder'd.

Anna.—Let me look on them. Ha! here is a heart,
The chosen crest of Douglas' valiant name!
These are no vulgar jewels. Guard the wretch.
(Exit Anna.)

Enter Servants with the Prisoner.

Prisoner.—I know no more than does the child unborn
Of what you charge me with.

First Servant.—You say so, sir!
But torture soon shall make you speak the truth.
Behold the lady of Lord Randolph comes:
Prepare yourself to meet her just revenge.

Enter Lady Randolph and Anna.

Anna.—Summon your utmost fortitude before
You speak with him. Your dignity, your fame,
Are now at stake. Think of the fatal secret
Which in a moment from your lips may fly.

Lady Randolph.—Thou shalt behold me, with a desp'rate heart,
Hear how my infant perish'd. See, he kneels.
(The prisoner kneels.)

Pris.—Heav'n bless that countenance, so sweet and mild!
A judge like thee makes innocence more bold.
Oh, save me, lady, from these cruel men
Who have attack'd and seiz'd me; who accuse
Me of intended murder. As I hope
For mercy at the judgment seat of heav'n,
The tender lamb, that never nipp'd the grass,
Is not more innocent than I of murder.

Lady Rand.—Of this man's guilt what proof can ye produce?

First Serv.—We found him lurking in the hollow Glynn.
 When view'd and call'd upon, amaz'd he fled.
 We overtook him, and inquir'd from whence
 And what he was; he said he came from far,
 And was upon his journey to the camp.
 Not satisfied with this, we search'd his clothes,
 And found these jewels, whose rich value plead
 Most powerfully against him. Hard he seems,
 And old in villainy. Permit us try
 His stubbornness against the torture's force.

Pris.—Oh, gentle lady, by your lord's dear life!
 Which these weak hands, I swear, did ne'er assail;
 And by your children's welfare, spare my age!
 Let not the iron tear my ancient joints,
 And my gray hairs bring to the grave with pain.

Lady Rand.—Account for these: thine own they cannot be:
 For these, I say: be steadfast to the truth;
 Detected falsehood is most certain death.

(Anna removes the servants, and returns.)

Pris.—Alas! I'm sore beset! let never man,
 For sake of lucre, sin against his soul!
 Eternal justice is in this most just!
 I, guiltless now, must former guilt reveal.

Lady Rand.—Oh! Anna, hear!—once more I charge thee speak
 The truth direct: for these to me foretell
 And certify a part of thy narration;
 With which if the remainder tallies not,
 An instant and a dreadful death abides thee.

Pris.—Then, thus abjur'd, I'll speak to thee as just
 As if you were the minister of heaven,
 Sent down to search the secret sins of men.
 Some eighteen years ago, I rented land
 Of brave Sir Malcolm, then Balarmo's lord;
 But falling to decay, his servants seiz'd
 All that I had, and then turn'd me and mine
 (Four helpless infants and their weeping mother)
 Out to the mercy of the winter winds.
 A little hovel by the river's side
 Receiv'd us: there hard labor, and the skill

In fishing, which was formerly my sport,
 Supported life. While thus we poorly liv'd,
 One stormy night, as I remember well,
 The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof:
 Red came the river down, and loud and oft
 The angry spirit of the water shriek'd.
 At the dead hour of night was heard the cry
 Of one in jeopardy. I rose, and ran
 To where the circling eddy of a pool,
 Beneath the ford, us'd oft to bring within
 My reach whatever floating thing the stream
 Had caught. The voice was ceas'd; the person lost.
 But looking sad and earnest on the waters,
 By the moon's light I saw, whirl'd round and round,
 A basket: soon I drew it to the bank,
 And nestled curious there an infant lay.

Lady Rand.—Was he alive?

Pris.—He was.

Lady Rand.—Inhuman that thou art!

How could'st thou kill what waves and tempests spar'd?

Pris.—I am not so inhuman.

Lady Rand.—Didst thou not?

Anna.—My noble mistress, you are mov'd too much:

This man has not the aspect of stern murder:

Let him go on, and you, I hope, will hear

Good tidings of your kinsman's long-lost child.

Pris.—The needy man, who has known better days,

One whom distress has spited at the world,

Is he whom tempting fiends would pitch upon

To do such deeds as make the prosperous men

Lift up their hands and wonder who could do them.

And such a man was I; a man declin'd,

Who saw no end of black adversity:

Yet, for the wealth of kingdoms, I would not

Have touch'd that infant with a hand of harm.

Lady Rand.—Ha! dost thou say so? Then perhaps he lives!

Pris.—Not many days ago he was alive.

Lady Rand.—O Heav'nly Pow'r! Did he, then, die so lately?

Pris.—I did not say he died; I hope he lives.
Not many days ago these eyes beheld
Him, flourishing in youth, and health, and beauty.

Lady Rand.—Where is he now?

Pris.—Alas! I know not where.

Lady Rand.—Oh! fate, I fear thee still. Thou riddler, speak
Direct and clear; else I will sear thy soul.

Anna.—Permit me, ever-honor'd! Keen impatience,
Tho' hard to be restrain'd, defeats itself.

Lady Rand.—Pursue thy story with a faithful tongue,
To the last hour that thou didst keep the child.

Pris.—Fear not my faith, tho' I must speak my shame.
Within the cradle, where the infant lay,
Was stow'd a mighty store of gold and jewels:
Tempted by which, we did resolve to hide
From all the world this wonderful event,
And like a peasant breed the noble child.
That none might mark the change of our estate,
We left the country, travell'd to the north,
Bought flocks and herds, and gradually brought forth
Our secret wealth. But God's all-seeing eye
Beheld our avarice, and smote us sore.
For, one by one, all our own children died,
And he, the stranger, sole remain'd the heir
Of what, indeed, was his. Fain, then, would I,
Who with a father's fondness lov'd the boy,
Have trusted him, now in the dawn of youth,
With his own secret; but my anxious wife,
Foreboding evil, never would consent.
Meanwhile the stripling grew in years and beauty;
And, as we oft observ'd, he bore himself
Not as the offspring of our cottage blood;
For nature will break out: mild with the mild,
But with the forward he was fierce as fire,
And night and day he talk'd of war and arms.
I set myself against his warlike bent;
But all in vain: for when a desperate band
Of robbers from the savage mountains came——

Lady Rand.—Eternal Providence! What is thy name?

Pris.—My name is Norval; and my name he bears.

Lady Rand.—'Tis he! 'tis he himself! It is my son!
Oh, sovereign mercy! 'Twas my child I saw!
No wonder, Anna, that my bosom burn'd.

Anna.—Just are your transports: ne'er was woman's heart
Prov'd with such fierce extremes. High-fated dame!
But yet remember that you are beheld
By servile eyes; your gestures may be seen
Impassion'd strange; perhaps your words o'erheard.

Lady Rand.—Well dost thou counsel, Anna: heav'n bestow
On me that wisdom which my state requires!

Anna.—The moments of deliberation pass,
And soon you must resolve. This useful man
Must be dismiss'd in safety ere my lord
Shall with his brave deliverer return.

Pris.—If I, amidst astonishment and fear,
Have of your words and gestures rightly judg'd,
Thou art the daughter of my ancient master;
The child I rescu'd from the flood is thine.

Lady Rand.—With thee dissimulation now were vain.
I am indeed the daughter of Sir Malcolm;
The child thou rescu'dst from the flood is mine.

Pris.—Blest be the hour that made me a poor man!
My poverty hath sav'd my master's house!

Lady Rand.—Thy words surprise me: sure thou dost not feign:
The tear stands in thine eye; such love from thee
Sir Malcolm's house deserv'd not; if aright
Thou told'st the story of thine own distress.

Pris.—Sir Malcolm of our barons was the flower;
The fastest friend, the best, the kindest master:
But, ah! he knew not of my sad estate.
After that battle, where his gallant son,
Your own brave brother, fell, the good old lord
Grew desperate and reckless of the world;
And never as he erst was wont, went forth
To overlook the conduct of his servants.
By them I was thrust out, and them I blame:
May heav'n so judge me as I judg'd my master;
And God so love me as I love his race!

Lady Rand.—His race shall yet reward thee. On thy faith
Depends the fate of thy lov'd master's house.
Rememb'rest thou a little lonely hut,
That like a holy hermitage appears
Among the cliffs of Carron?

Pris.—I remember.
The cottage of the cliffs.

Lady Rand.—'Tis that I mean:
There dwells a man, of venerable age,
Who in my father's service spent his youth:
Tell him I sent thee, and with him remain
Till I shall call upon thee to declare,
Before the king and nobles, what thou now
To me hast told. No more but this, and thou
Shalt live in honor all thy future days:
Thy son so long shall call thee father still,
And all the land shall bless the man who sav'd
The son of Douglas, and Sir Malcolm's heir.
Remember well my words: if thou should'st meet
Him whom thou call'st thy son, still call him so;
And mention nothing of his nobler father.

Pris.—Fear not that I shall mar so fair an harvest
By putting in my sickle ere 'tis ripe.
Why did I leave my home and ancient dame?
To find the youth to tell him all I knew,
And make him wear these jewels in his arms;
Which might, I thought, be challeng'd, and so bring
To light the secret of his noble birth.

(Lady Randolph goes toward the servants.)

Lady Rand.—This man is not th' assassin you suspected,
Tho' chance combin'd some likelihoods against him.
He is the faithful bearer of the jewels
To their right owner, whom in haste he seeks.
'Tis meet that you should put him on his way,
Since your mistaken zeal hath dragg'd him hither.

(Exeunt stranger and servants.)

My faithful Anna, dost thou share my joy?
I know thou dost. Unparallel'd event!
Reaching from heav'n to earth, Jehovah's arm

Snatch'd from the waves and brings to me my son!
 Judge of the widow and the orphan's father,
 Accept a widow's and a mother's thanks
 For such a gift! What does my Anna think
 Of the young eaglet of a valiant nest?
 How soon he gaz'd on bright and burning arms,
 Spurn'd the low dunghill where his fate had thrown him,
 And tower'd up to the region of his sire!

Anna.—How fondly did your eyes devour the boy!
 Mysterious nature, with the unseen cord
 Of powerful instinct, drew you to your own.

Lady Rand.—The ready story of his birth believ'd
 Suppress'd my fancy quite; nor did he owe
 To any likeness my so sudden favor:
 But now I long to see his face again,
 Examine every feature, and find out
 The lineaments of Douglas, or my own.
 But most of all I long to let him know
 Who his true parents are, to clasp his neck,
 And tell him all the story of his father.

Anna.—With wary caution you must bear yourself
 In public, lest your tenderness break forth,
 And in observers stir conjectures strange.
 For if a cherub in the shape of woman
 Should walk this world, yet defamation would,
 Like a vile cur, bark at the angel's train——
 To-day the baron started at your tears.

Lady Rand.—He did so, Anna! well thy mistress knows,
 If the least circumstance, mote of offense,
 Should touch the baron's eye, his sight would be
 With jealousy disorder'd. But the more
 It does behoove me instant to declare
 The birth of Douglas, and assert his rights.
 This night I purpose with my son to meet,
 Reveal the secret, and consult with him:
 For wise is he, or my fond judgment errs.
 As he does now, so look'd his noble father,
 Array'd in nature's ease: his mien, his speech,
 Were sweetly simple, and full oft deceiv'd

Those trivial mortals who seem always wise.
 But, when the matter match'd his mighty mind,
 Up rose the hero: on his piercing eye
 Sat observation: on each glance of thought
 Decision follow'd, as the thunder-bolt
 Pursues the flash.

Anna.—That demon haunts you still:

Behold Glenalvon.

Lady Rand.—Now I shun him not.

This day I brav'd him in behalf of Norval:

Perhaps too far: at least my nicer fears

For Douglas thus interpret.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glenalvon.—Noble dame!

The hov'ring Dane at last his men hath landed:

No band of pirates, but a mighty host,

That come to settle where their valor conquers,

To win a country, or to lose themselves.

Lady Rand.—But whence comes this intelligence, Glenalvon?

Glen.—A nimble courier sent from yonder camp,

To hasten up the chieftains of the north,

Inform'd me, as he pass'd, that the fierce Dane

Had on the eastern coast of Lothian landed,

Near to that place where the sea-rock immense,

Amazing Base, looks o'er a fertile land.

Lady Rand.—Then must this western army march to join

The warlike troops that guard Edina's tow'rs.

Glen.—Beyond all question. If impairing time

Has not effac'd the image of a place

Once perfect in my breast, there is a wild

Which lies to westward of that mighty rock,

And seems by nature formed for the camp

Of water-wafted armies, whose chief strength

Lies in firm foot, unflank'd with warlike horse:

If martial skill directs the Danish lords,

There inaccessible their army lies

To our swift-scouring horse, the bloody field

Must man to man, and foot to foot, be fought.

Lady Rand.—How many mothers shall bewail their sons!
How many widows weep their husbands slain!
Ye dames of Denmark! ev'n for you I feel,
Who, sadly sitting on the sea-beat shore,
Long look for lords that never shall return.

Glen.—Oft has th' unconquer'd Caledonian sword
Widow'd the north. The children of the slain
Come, as I hope, to meet their fathers' fate.
The monster war, with her infernal brood,
Loud yelling fury, and life-ending pain,
Are objects suited to Glenalvon's soul.
Scorn is more grievous than the pains of death:
Reproach more piercing than the pointed sword.

Lady Rand.—I scorn thee not, but when I ought to scorn;
Nor e'er reproach, but when insulted virtue
Against audacious vice asserts herself.
I own thy worth, Glenalvon; none more apt
Than I to praise thine eminence in arms,
And be the echo of thy martial fame.
No longer vainly feed a guilty passion:
Go and pursue a lawful mistress—glory.
Upon the Danish chiefs redeem thy fault,
And let thy valor be the shield of Randolph.

Glen.—One instant stay, and hear an alter'd man.
When beauty pleads for virtue, vice, abash'd,
Flies its own colors, and goes o'er to virtue.
I am your convert; time will show how truly:
Yet one immediate proof I mean to give.
That youth, for whom your ardent zeal to-day
Somewhat too haughtily defied your slave,
Amidst the shock of armies I'll defend,
And turn death from him with a guardian arm.
Sedate by use, my bosom maddens not
At the tumultuous uproar of the field.

Lady Rand.—Act thus, Glenalvon, and I am thy friend;
But that's thy least reward. Believe me, sir,
The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he who loves not others, lives unblest.

(Exit Lady Randolph and Anna.)

Glen.—Amen! and virtue is its own reward!

I think that I have hit the very tone
 In which she loves to speak. Honey'd assent,
 How pleasant art thou to the taste of man,
 And woman also! flattery direct
 Rarely disgusts. They little know mankind
 Who doubt its operation: 'tis my key,
 And opes the wicket of the human heart.
 How far I have succeeded now I know not,
 Yet I incline to think her stormy virtue
 Is lull'd awhile: 'tis her alone I fear:
 While she and Randolph live, and live in faith
 And amity, uncertain is my tenure.
 Fate o'er my head suspends disgrace and death
 By that weak hair, a peevish female's will.
 I am not idle: but the ebbs and flows
 Of fortune's tide cannot be calculated.
 That slave of Norval's I have found most apt:
 I show'd him gold, and he has pawn'd his soul
 To say and swear whatever I suggest.
 Norval, I'm told, has that alluring look,
 'Twixt man and woman, which I have observ'd
 To charm the nicer and fantastic dames,
 Who are, like Lady Randolph, full of virtue.
 In raising Randolph's jealousy I may
 But point him to the truth. He seldom errs
 Who thinks the worst he can of womankind. (Exit.)

ACT IV.

Flourish of trumpets.

Enter Lord Randolph.

Lord Randolph.—Summon an hundred horse, by break of day,
 To wait our pleasure at the castle gate.

Enter Lady Randolph.

Lady Randolph.—Alas! my lord! I've heard unwelcome news;
 The Danes are landed.

Lord Rand.—Ay, no inroad this
Of the Northumbrian bent to take a spoil:
No sportive war, no tournament essay
Of some young knight resolv'd to break a spear
And stain with hostile blood his maiden arms.
The Danes are landed: we must beat them back,
Or live the slaves of Denmark.

Lady Rand.—Dreadful times!

Lord Rand.—The fenceless villages are all forsaken;
The trembling mothers and their children lodg'd
In wall-girt towers and castles; while the men
Retire indignant. Yet, like broken waves,
They but retire more awful to return.

Lady Rand.—Immense, as fame reports, the Danish host——

Lord Rand.—Were it as numerous as loud fame reports,
An army knit like ours would pierce it thro':
Brothers that shrink not from each other's side,
And fond companions, fill our warlike files:
For his dear offspring, and the wife he loves,
The husband, and the fearless father arm.
In vulgar breasts heroic ardor burns,
And the poor peasant mates his daring lord.

Lady Rand.—Men's minds are temper'd, like their swords, for
war;

Lovers of danger, on destruction's brink:
They joy to rear erect their daring forms.
Hence, early grave; hence, the lone widow's life:
And the sad mother's grief-embitter'd age.
Where is our gallant guest?

Lord Rand.—Down in the vale
I left him, managing a fiery steed,
Whose stubbornness had foil'd the strength and skill
Of every rider. But behold, he comes,
In earnest conversation with Glenalvon.

Enter Norval and Glenalvon.

Glenalvon! with the lark arise; go forth,
And lead my troops that lie in yonder vale:

Private I travel to the royal camp:
 Norval, thou goest with me. But say, young man!
 Where didst thou learn so to discourse of war,
 And in such terms as I o'erheard to-day?
 War is no village science, nor its phrase
 A language taught among the shepherd swains.

Norval.—Small is the skill my lord delights to praise
 In him he favors. Hear from whence it came.
 Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote
 And inaccessible, by shepherds trod,
 In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
 A hermit liv'd; a melancholy man,
 Who was the wonder of our wand'ring swains.
 Austere and lonely, cruel to himself,
 Did they report him; the cold earth his bed,
 Water his drink, his food the shepherds' alms.
 I went to see him and my heart was touch'd
 With rev'rence and with pity. Mild he spake,
 And, ent'ring on discourse, such stories told
 As made me oft revisit his sad cell.
 For he had been a soldier in his youth;
 And fought in famous battles, when the peers
 Of Europe, by the bold Godfredo led,
 Against th' usurping infidel display'd
 The blessed cross, and won the holy land.
 Pleas'd with my admiration, and the fire
 His speech struck from me, the old man would shake
 His years away, and act his young encounters.
 Then, having show'd his wounds, he'd sit him down
 And all the live-long day discourse of war.
 To help my fancy, in the smooth green turf
 He cut the figures of the marshal'd hosts;
 Describ'd the motions, and explain'd the use
 Of the deep column and the lengthen'd line,
 'The square, the crescent and the phalanx firm
 For all that Saracen or Christian knew
 Of war's vast art was to this hermit known.

Lord Rand.—Why did this soldier in a desert hide
 Those qualities that should have grac'd a camp?

Norr.—That, too, at last I learn'd. Unhappy man!
 Returning homeward by Messina's port,
 Loaded with wealth and honors bravely won,
 A rude and boist'rous captain of the sea
 Fasten'd a quarrel on him. Fierce they fought,
 The stranger fell, and with his dying breath
 Declar'd his name and lineage! Mighty power!
 The soldier cried, my brother! Oh! my brother!

Lady Rand.—His brother!

Norr.—Yes; of the same parents born;
 His only brother. They exchang'd forgiveness;
 And happy, in my mind, was he that died:
 For many deaths has the survivor suffer'd.
 In the wild desert on a rock he sits,
 Or on some nameless stream's untrodden banks,
 And ruminates all day his dreadful fate.
 At times, alas! not in his perfect mind!
 Holds dialogues with his lov'd brother's ghost;
 And oft each night forsakes his sullen couch,
 To make sad orisons for him he slew.

Lady Rand.—To what mysterious woes are mortals born!
 In this dire tragedy were there no more
 Unhappy persons? did the parents live?

Norr.—No; they were dead: kind heav'n had clos'd their eyes
 Before their son had shed his brother's blood.

Lord Rand.—Hard is his fate; for he was not to blame!
 There is destiny in this strange world,
 Which oft decrees an undeserved doom:
 Let schoolmen tell us why. From whence these sounds?
 (Trumpets at a distance.)

Enter an Officer.

Officer.—My lord, the trumpets of the troops of Lorn:
 The valiant leader hails the noble Randolph.

Lord Rand.—Mine ancient guest! does he the warriors lead?
 Has Denmark rous'd the brave old Knight to arms?

Offi.—No; worn with warfare, he resigns the sword.
 His eldest hope, the valiant John of Lorn,
 Now leads his kindred bauds.

Lord Rand.—Glenalvon, go.

With hospitality's most strong request

Entreat the chief.

(Exit Glenalvon.)

Off.—My lord, requests are vain.

He urges on, impatient of delay,

Stung with the tidings of the foe's approach. (Exit.)

Lord Rand.—May victory sit on the warrior's plume!

Bravest of men! his flocks and herds are safe;

Remote from war's alarms his pastures lie,

By mountains inaccessible secur'd:

Yet foremost he into the plain descends,

Eager to bleed in battles not his own.

Such were the heroes of the ancient world:

Contemners they of indolence and gain;

But still for love of glory, and of arms,

Prone to encounter peril, and to lift

Against each strong antagonist the spear,

I'll go and press the hero to my breast. (Exit.)

Lady Rand.—The soldier's loftiness, the pride and pomp

Investing awful war, Norval, I see,

Transport thy youthful mind.

Norv.—Ah! should they not?

Blest be the hour I left my father's house!

I might have been a shepherd all my days,

And stole obscurely to a peasant's grave.

Now, if I live, with mighty chiefs I stand;

And, if I fall, with noble dust I lie.

Lady Rand.—There is a gen'rous spirit in thy breast

That could have well sustain'd a prouder fortune.

This way with me, under yon spreading beech,

Since lucky chance has left us here alone,

Unseen, unheard, by human eye or ear,

I will amaze thee with a wond'rous tale.

Norv.—Let there be danger, lady, with the secret,

That I may hug it to my grateful heart,

And prove my faith. Command my sword, my life:

These are the sole possessions of poor Norval.

Lady Rand.—Know'st thou these gems?

Norv.—Durst I believe mine eyes,

I'd say I knew them and they were my father's.

Lady Rand.—Thy father's, say'st thou! ah! they were thy father's!

Norv.—I saw them once, and curiously inquir'd
Of both my parents whence such splendor came?
But I was check'd, and more could never learn.

Lady Rand.—Then learn of me, thou art not Norval's son.

Norv.—Not Norval's son!

Lady Rand.—Nor of a shepherd sprung.

Norv.—Lady, who am I, then?

Lady Rand.—Noble thou art;
For noble was thy sire!

Norv.—I will believe——

O! tell me further! Say, who was my father?

Lady Rand.—Douglas!

Norv.—Lord Douglas, whom to-day I saw?

Lady Rand.—His younger brother.

Norv.—And in yonder camp?

Lady Rand.—Alas!

Norv.—You make me tremble—— Sighs and tears!
Lives my brave father?

Lady Rand.—Ah! too brave, indeed!
He fell in battle ere thyself was born.

Norv.—Ah! me unhappy! ere I saw the light?
But does my mother live? I may conclude,
From my own fate, her portion has been sorrow.

Lady Rand.—She lives; but wastes her life in constant woe
Weeping her husband slain, her infant lost.

Norv.—You that are skill'd so well in the sad story
Of my unhappy parents, and with tears,
Bewail their destiny, now have compassion
Upon the offspring of the friends you lov'd!
O! tell me who, and where my mother is!
Oppress'd by a base world, perhaps she bends
Beneath the weight of other ills than grief;

And, desolate, implores of heav'n the aid
Her son should give. It is, it must be so—
Your countenance confesses that she's wretched.
O! tell me her condition! Can the sword—
Who shall resist me in a parent's cause?

Lady Rand.—Thy virtue ends her woe! My son! my son!

Norr.—Art thou my mother?

Lady Rand.—I am thy mother, and the wife of Douglas!

(Falls upon his neck.)

Norr.—O heav'n and earth, how wondrous is my fate!
Art thou my mother! Ever let me kneel!

Lady Rand.—Image of Douglas! Fruit of fatal love!
All that I owe thy sire, I pay to thee.

Norr.—Respect and admiration still possess me,
Checking the love and fondness of a son.
Yet I was filial to my humble parents.
But did my sire surpass the rest of men,
As thou excellest all of womankind?

Lady Rand.—Arise, my son! In me thou dost behold
The poor remains of beauty once admir'd:
The autumn of my days is come already;
For sorrow made my summer haste away.
Yet in my prime I equal'd not thy father:
His eyes were like the eagle's, yet sometimes
Liker the dove's; and, as he pleas'd, he won
All hearts with softness, or with spirit aw'd.

Norr.—How did he fall? Sure, 'twas a bloody field
When Douglas died. O I have much to ask!

Lady Rand.—Hereafter thou shalt hear the lengthen'd tale
Of all thy father's and thy mother's woes.
At present this: thou art the rightful heir
Of yonder castle, and the wide domains
Which now Lord Randolph, as my husband, holds.
But thou shalt not be wrong'd; I have the power
To right thee still: before the king I'll kneel,
And call Lord Douglas to protect his blood.

Norr.—The blood of Douglas will protect itself.

Lady Rand.—But we shall need both friends and favor, boy,
 To wrest thy lands and lordship from the gripe
 Of Randolph and his kinsman. Yet I think
 My tale will move each gentle heart to pity,
 My life incline the virtuous to believe.

Norv.—To be the son of Douglas is to me
 Inheritance enough. Declare my birth,
 And in the field I'll seek for fame and fortune.

Lady Rand.—Thou dost not know what perils and injustice
 Await the poor man's valor. O! my son!
 The noblest blood of all the land's abash'd,
 Having no lacquey but pale poverty.
 Too long hast thou been thus attended, Douglas!
 Too long hast thou been deem'd a peasant's child.
 The wanton heir of some inglorious chief
 Perhaps has scorn'd thee, in the youthful sports;
 Whilst thy indignant spirit swell'd in vain!
 Such contumely thou no more shalt bear:
 But how I purpose to redress thy wrongs
 Must be hereafter told. Prudence directs
 That we should part before yon chiefs return.
 Retire, and from thy rustic follower's hand
 Receive a billet, which thy mother's care,
 Anxious to see thee, dictated before
 This casual opportunity arose
 Of private conference. Its purport mark;
 For, as I there appoint, we meet again.
 Leave me, my son! and frame thy manners still
 To Norval's, not to noble Douglas' state.

Norv.—I will remember. Where is Norval now?
 That good old man.

Lady Rand.—At hand conceal'd he lies,
 An useful witness. But beware, my son,
 Of yon Glenalvon; in his guilty breast
 Resides a villain's shrewdness, ever prone
 To false conjecture. He hath griev'd my heart.

Norv.—Has he, indeed? Then let yon false Glenalvon
 Beware of me. (Exit.)

Lady Rand.—There burst the smother'd flame!
 O! thou all righteous and eternal King!
 Who father of the fatherless art call'd,
 Protect my son! Thy inspiration, Lord!
 Hath fill'd his bosom with that sacred fire,
 Which in the breasts of his forefathers burn'd:
 Set him on high like them, that he may shine,
 The star and glory of his native land!
 Then let the minister of death descend,
 And bear my willing spirit to its place,
 Yonder they come. How do bad women find
 Unchanging aspects to conceal their guilt?
 When I, by reason and by justice urg'd,
 Full hardly can dissemble with these men
 In nature's pious cause.

Enter Lord Randolph and Glenalvon.

Lord Randolph.—Yon gallant chief,
 Of arms enamor'd, all repose disclaims.

Lady Rand.—Be not, my lord, by his example sway'd:
 Arrange the business of to-morrow now,
 And, when you enter, speak of war no more. (Exit.)

Lord Rand.—'Tis so, by heav'n! her mien, her voice, her eye,
 And her impatience to be gone, confirm it.

Glenalvon.—He parted from her now: behind the mount,
 Among the trees, I saw him glide along.

Lord Rand.—For sad, sequestered virtue she's renown'd!

Glen.—Most true, my lord.

Lord Rand.—Yet this distinguish'd dame
 Invites a youth, the acquaintance of a day,
 Alone to meet her at the midnight hour.
 This assignation (shows a letter) the assassin freed,
 Her manifest affection for the youth,
 Might breed suspicion in a husband's brain,
 Whose gentle consort all for love had wedded;
 Much more in mine. Matilda never lov'd me.
 Let no man, after me, a woman wed,
 Whose heart he knows he has not; though she brings

A mine of gold, a kingdom for her dowry,
 For let her seem, like the night's shadowy queen,
 Cold and contemplative;—he cannot trust her:
 She may, she will, bring shame and sorrow on him;
 The worst of sorrows and the worst of shames!

Glen.—Yield not, my lord, to such afflicting thoughts,
 But let the spirit of an husband sleep,
 Till your own senses make a sure conclusion.
 This billet must to blooming Norval go:
 At the next turn awaits my trusty spy;
 I'll give it him refitted for his master.
 In the close thicket take your secret stand;
 The moon shines bright, and your eyes may judge
 Of their behavior.

Lord Rand.—Thou dost counsel well.

Glen.—Permit me now to make one slight essay
 Of all the trophies which vain mortals boast,
 By wit, by valor or by wisdom won,
 The first and fairest in a young man's eye
 Is woman's captive heart. Successful love
 With glorious fumes intoxicates the mind!
 And the proud conqueror in triumph moves,
 Air-born, exalted above vulgar men.

Lord Rand.—And what avails this maxim?

Glen.—Much, my lord!
 Withdraw a little: I'll accost young Norval,
 And with ironical derisive counsel
 Explore his spirit. If he is no more
 Than humble Norval, by thy favor rais'd,
 Brave as he is, he'll shrink astonish'd from me;
 But if he be the fav'rite of the fair,
 Lov'd by the first of Caledonia's dames,
 He'll turn upon me, as the lion turns
 Upon the hunter's spear.

Lord Rand.—'Tis shrewdly thought.

Glen.—When we grow loud, draw near. But let my lord
 His rising wrath restrain. (Exit Randolph.)
 'Tis strange, by heav'n!

That she should run full tilt her fond career,
 To one so little known. She, too, that seem'd
 Pure as the winter stream, when ice emboss'd
 Whitens its course. Even I did think her chaste,
 Whose charity exceeds not. Precious sex!
 Whose deeds lascivious pass Glenalvon's thoughts!
 (Norval appears.)

His port I love; he's in a proper mood
 To chide the thunder, if at him it roar'd.
 Has Norval seen the troops?

Norval.—The setting sun,
 With yellow radiance lighten'd all the vale,
 And as the warriors mov'd, each polish'd helm,
 Corslet or spear glanc'd back his gilded beams.
 The hill they climb'd, and halting at its top,
 Of more than mortal size, tow'ring, they seem'd,
 An host angelic, clad in burning arms.

Glen.—Thou talk'st it well; no leader of our host,
 In sounds more lofty, speaks of glorious war.

Norv.—If I shall e'er acquire a leader's name,
 My speech will be less ardent. Novelty
 Now prompts my tongue, and youthful admiration
 Vents itself freely; since no part is mine
 Of praise pertaining to the great in arms.

Glen.—You wrong yourself, brave sir; your martial deeds
 Have rank'd you with the great: but mark me, Norval;
 Lord Randolph's favor now exalts your youth
 Above his veterans of famous service.
 Let me, who knows the soldiers, counsel you.
 Give them all honor; seem not to command:
 Else they will scarcely brook your late-sprung power,
 Which nor alliance props, nor birth adorns.

Norv.—Sir, I have been accustom'd all my days
 To hear and speak the plain and simple truth:
 And tho' I have been told that there are men
 Who borrowed friendship's tongue to speak their scorn,
 Yet in such language I am little skill'd.
 Therefore, I thank Glenalvon for his counsel,
 Altho' it sounded harshly. Why remind

Me of my birth obscure? Why slur my power
With such contemptuous terms?

Glen.—I did not mean

To gall your pride, which now I see is great.

Norr.—My pride?

Glen.—Suppress it as you wish to prosper.

Your pride's excessive. Yet for Randolph's sake

I will not leave you to its rash direction.

If thus you swell and frown at high-born men,

Think you they will endure a shepherd's scorn?

Norr.—A shepherd's scorn!

Glen.—Yes, if you presume

To bend on soldiers these disdainful eyes,

What will become of you?

Norr.—If this were told——

(*Aside.*)

Hast thou no fears of thy presumptuous self?

Glen.—Ha! Dost thou threaten me?

Norr.—Didst thou not hear?

Glen.—Unwillingly I did; a nobler foe

Had not been question'd thus. But such as thee——

Norr.—Whom dost thou think me?

Glen.—Norval.

Norr.—So I am——

And who is Norval in Glenalvon's eyes?

Glen.—A peasant's son, a wand'ring beggar-boy,

At best no more, even if he speaks the truth.

Norr.—False as thou art, dost thou suspect my truth?

Glen.—Thy truth! thou'rt all a lie; and false as hell

Is the vain-glorious tale thou told'st to Randolph.

Norr.—If I were chain'd, unarm'd and bedrid old,

Perhaps I should revile; but as I am

I have no tongue to rail. The humble Norval

Is of a race who strive not but with deeds.

Did I not fear to free thy shallow valor,

And make thee sink too soon beneath my sword,

I'd tell thee—what thou art. I know thee well.

Glen.—Dost thou not know Glenalvon, born to command
Ten thousand slaves like thee?

Norv.—Villain, no more;
Draw and defend thy life. I did design
To have defi'd thee in another cause:
But heaven accelerates its vengeance on thee.
Now for my own and Lady Randolph's wrongs.

Enter Lord Randolph.

Lord Randolph.—Hold, I command you both. The man that
stirs
Makes me his foe.

Norv.—Another voice than thine
That threat had vainly sounded, noble Randolph.

Glen.—Hear him, my lord; he's wondrous condescending!
Mark the humility of shepherd Norval!

Norv.—Now you may scoff in safety. (Sheaths his sword.)

Lord Rand.—Speak not thus,
Taunting each other; but unfold to me
The cause of quarrel, then I judge betwixt you.

Norv.—Nay, my good lord, tho' I revere you much,
My cause I plead not, nor demand your judgment.
I blush to speak; I will not, cannot speak
Th' opprobrious words that I from him have borne.
To the liege lord of my dear native land
I owe a subject's homage; but even him
And his high arbitration I'd reject.
Within my bosom reigns another lord;
Honor, sole judge and umpire of itself.
If my free speech offend you, noble Randolph,
Revoke your favors, and let Norval go
Hence as he came, alone, but not dishonor'd.

Lord Rand.—Thus far I'll mediate with impartial voice:
The ancient foe of Caledonia's land
Now waves his banners o'er her frightened fields.
Suspend your purpose till your country's arms
Repel the bold invader; then decide
The private quarrel.

Glen.—I agree to this.

Norv.—And I.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—The banquet waits.

Lord Rand.—We come. (Exit Randolph and Servant.)

Glen.—Norval,

Let not our variance mar the social hour,
Nor wrong the hospitality of Randolph.
Nor frowning anger, nor yet wrinkled hate,
Shall stain my countenance. Smooth thou thy brow;
Nor let our strife disturb the gentle dame.

Norv.—Think not so lightly, sir, of my resentment;

When we contend again, our strife is mortal. (Exeunt.)

ACT V.

The Wood.

Enter Douglas.

Douglas.—This is the place, the centre of the grove;
Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
How sweet and solemn is this midnight scene!
The silver moon, unclouded, holds her way
Thro' skies where I could count each little star.
The fanning west wind scarcely stirs the leaves;
The river, rushing o'er its pebbled bed,
Imposes silence with a stilly sound.
In such a place as this, at such an hour,
If ancestry can be in aught believ'd,
Descending spirits have convers'd with man,
And told the secrets of the world unknown.

Enter Old Norval.

Norval.—'Tis he. But what if he should chide me hence!
His just reproach I fear. (Douglas turns and sees him.)
Forgive, forgive,
Canst thou forgive the man, the selfish man,
Who bred Sir Malcolm's heir a shepherd's son?

Doug.—Kneel not to me: thou art my father still:
Thy wish'd-for presence now completes my joy.
Welcome to me, my fortunes thou shalt share,
And ever honor'd with thy Douglas live.

Norv.—And dost thou call me father? Oh, my son!
I think that I could die to make amends
For the great wrong I did thee. 'Twas my crime
Which in the wilderness so long conceal'd
The blossom of thy youth.

Doug.—Not worse the fruit,
That in the wilderness the blossom blow'd.
Among the shepherds, in the humble cot,
I learn'd some lessons which I'll not forget
When I inhabit yonder lofty towers.
I, who was once a swain, will ever prove
The poor man's friend; and when my vassals bow,
Norval shall smooth the crested pride of Douglas.

Norv.—Let me but live to see thine exaltation!
Yet grievous are my fears. Oh, leave this place,
And those unfriendly towers.

Doug.—Why should I leave them?

Norv.—Lord Randolph and his kinsmen seek your life.

Doug.—How know'st thou that?

Norv.—I will inform you how.

When evening came, I left the secret place
Appointed for me by your mother's care,
And fondly trod in each accustom'd path
That to the castle leads. While thus I rang'd,
I was alarm'd with unexpected sounds
Of earnest voices. On the persons came;
Unseen I lurk'd, and overheard them name
Each other as they talk'd, Lord Randolph this,
And that Glenalvon: still of you they spoke,
And of the lady: threat'ning was their speech,
Tho' but imperfectly my ear could hear it.
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discov'ry;
And ever and anon they vow'd revenge.

Doug.—Revenge! for what?

Norr.—For being what you are;

Sir Malcolm's heir: how else have you offended?
 When they were gone, I hied me to my cottage,
 And there sat musing how I best might find
 Means to inform you of their wicked purpose.
 But I could think of none: at last, perplex'd,
 I issu'd forth, encompassing the tower
 With many a weary step and wishful look.
 Now Providence hath brought you to my sight,
 Let not your too courageous spirit scorn
 The caution which I give.

Doug.—I scorn it not.

My mother warn'd me of Glenalvon's baseness:
 But I will not suspect the noble Randolph.
 In our encounter with the vile assassins,
 I mark'd his brave demeanor: him I'll trust.

Norr.—I fear you will too far.

Doug.—Here in this place

I wait my mother's coming: she shall know
 What thou hast told: her counsel I will follow:
 And cautious ever are a mother's counsels.
 You must depart; your presence may prevent
 Our interview.

Norr.—My blessings rest upon thee!

Oh, may heav'n's hand, which sav'd thee from the wave,
 And from the sword of foes, be near thee still;
 Turning mischance, if aught hangs o'er thy head,
 All upon mine! (Exit.)

Doug.—He loves me like a parent;

And must not, shall not lose the son he loves,
 Altho' his son has found a nobler father.
 Eventful day! how hast thou chang'd my state!
 Once on the cold and winter-shaded side
 Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me,
 Never to thrive, child of another soil:
 Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,
 Like the green thorn of May my fortune flowers.
 Ye glorious stars! high heav'n's resplendent host!
 To whom I oft have of my lot complain'd,

Hear and record my soul's unalter'd wish!
 Dead or alive, let me but be renown'd!
 May heav'n inspire some fierce gigantic Dane
 To give a bold defiance to our host!
 Before he speaks it out I will accept;
 Like Douglas conquer, or like Douglas die.

Enter Lady Randolph.

Lady Randolph.—My son! I heard a voice——

Doug.—The voice was mine.

Lady Rand.—Didst thou complain aloud to nature's ear
 That thus in dusky shades, at midnight hours,
 By stealth the mother and the son should meet?
 (Embracing him.)

Doug.—No; on this happy day, this better birthday,
 My thoughts and words are all of hope and joy.

Lady Rand.—Sad fear and melancholy still divide
 The empire of my breast with hope and joy.
 Now hear what I advise.

Doug.—First let me tell
 What may the tenor of your counsel change.

Lady Rand.—My heart forebodes some evil!

Doug.—"Tis not good.
 At eve, unseen by Randolph and Glenalvon,
 The good old Norval in the grove o'erheard
 Their conversation: oft they mention'd me
 With dreadful threat'nings; you they sometimes nam'd.
 'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery;
 And ever and anon they vow'd revenge.

Lady Rand.—Defend us, gracious God: we are betray'd;
 They have found out the secret of thy birth;
 It must be so. That is the great discovery:
 Sir Malcolm's heir is come to claim his own,
 And he will be reveng'd. Perhaps even now,
 Arm'd and prepar'd for murder, they but wait
 A darker and more silent hour, to break
 Into the chamber where they think thou sleep'st.
 This moment, this, heav'n hath ordain'd to save thee!
 Fly to the camp, my son!

Doug.—And leave you here?

No: to the castle let us go together,
Call up the ancient servants of your house,
Who in their youth did eat your father's bread,
Then tell them loudly that I am your son.
If in the breasts of men one spark remains
Of sacred love, fidelity or pity,
Some in your cause will arm. I ask but few
To drive those spoilers from my father's house.

Lady Rand.—Oh, nature, nature! what can check thy force?

Thou genuine offspring of the daring Douglas!
But rush not on destruction: save thyself,
And I am safe. To me they mean no harm.
Thy stay but risks thy precious life in vain.
That winding path conducts thee to the river.
Cross where thou seest a broad and beaten way,
Which, running eastward, leads thee to the camp.
Instant demand admittance to Lord Douglas.
Show him these jewels, which his brother wore.
Thy look, thy voice, will make him feel the truth,
Which I by certain proof will soon confirm.

Doug.—I yield me and obey; but yet my heart
Bleeds at this parting. Something bids me stay
And guard a mother's life. Oft have I read
Of wondrous deeds by one bold arm achiev'd.
Our foes are two: no more: let me go forth,
And see if any shield can guard Glenalvon.

Lady Rand.—If thou regard'st thy mother, or rever'st
Thy father's mem'ry, think of this no more.
One thing I have to say before we part;
Long wert thou lost; and thou art found, my child,
In a most fearful season. War and battle
I have great cause to dread. Too well I see
Which way the current of thy temper sets:
To-day I've found thee. Oh! my long-lost hope!
If thou to giddy valor giv'st the rein,
To-morrow I may lose my son forever.
The love of thee, before thou saw'st the light,
Sustain'd my life when thy brave father fell.

If thou shalt fall, I have nor love nor hope
In this waste world! my son, remember me!

Doug.—What shall I say? how can I give you comfort?

The god of battles of my life dispose
As may be best for you! for whose dear sake
I will not bear myself as I resolv'd.
But yet consider, as no vulgar name
That which I boast sounds among martial men,
How will inglorious caution suit my claim?
The post of fate unshrinking I maintain.
My country's foes must witness who I am.
On the invaders' heads I'll prove my birth,
Till friends and foes confess the genuine strain.
If in this strife I fall, blame not your son,
Who, if he lives not honor'd, must not live.

Lady Rand.—I will not utter what my bosom feels.
Too well I love that valor which I warn.
Farewell, my son! my counsels are but vain.

(Embracing.)

And, as high heav'n hath will'd it, all must be.

(Separate.)

Gaze not on me, thou wilt mistake the path:
I'll point it out again.

Just as they are separating, enter from the wood Lord Randolph and Glenalvon.

Lord Randolph.—Not in her presence.

Now——

Glenalvon.—I'm prepar'd.

Lord Rand.—No; I command thee stay.

I go alone; it never shall be said
That I took odds to combat mortal man.
The noblest vengeance is the most complete.

(Exit Lord Randolph.)

(Glenalvon makes some steps to the same side of the stage, listens, and speaks.)

Glen.—Demons of death, come settle on my sword,
And to double slaughter guide it home!
The lover and the husband both must die.

(Lord Randolph behind the scenes.)

Lord Rand.—Draw, villain! draw.

Doug.—Assail me not, Randolph;
Not as thou lov'st thyself.

(Clashing of swords. Glenalvon running out.)

Now is the time.

Enter Lady Randolph at the opposite side of the stage, faint
and breathless.

Lady Randolph.—Lord Randolph, hear me; all shall be thine
own:

But spare! Oh, spare my son!

Enter Douglas, with a sword in each hand.

Douglas.—My mother's voice!
I can protect thee still.

Lady Rand.—He lives, he lives:
For this, for this to heav'n eternal praise!
But sure I saw thee fall.

Doug.—It was Glenalvon.

Just as my arm had master'd Randolph's sword,
The villain came behind me; but I slew him.

Lady Rand.—Behind thee! Ah, thou'rt wounded! O my child,
How pale thou look'st! and shall I lose thee now?

Doug.—Do not despair: I feel a little faintness;
I hope it will not last. (Leans upon his sword.)

Lady Rand.—There is no hope!
And we must part! the hand of death is on thee!
O my beloved child! O Douglas, Douglas!

Doug.—Too soon we part; I have not long been Douglas.
O destiny! hardly thou dealest with me:
Clouded and hid, a stranger to myself,
In low and poor obscurity I liv'd.

Lady Rand.—Has heav'n preserved thee for an end like this?

Doug.—O had I fallen as my brave fathers fell,
 Turning with great effort the tide of battle!
 Like them I should have smil'd and welcom'd death.
 But thus to perish by a villain's hand!
 Cut off from nature's and from glory's course
 Which never mortal was so fond to run.

Lady Rand.—Hear, Justice! hear! stretch thy avenging arm.
 (Douglas falls.)

Doug.—Unknown I die; no tongue shall speak of me.
 Some noble spirits, judging by themselves,
 May yet conjecture what I might have proved,
 And think life only wanting to my fame:
 But who shall comfort thee?

Lady Rand.—Despair! despair!

Doug.—O had it pleas'd high heav'n to let me live
 A little while! My eyes that gaze on thee
 Grow dim apace! my mother—oh, my mother! (Dies.)

Enter Lord Randolph and Anna.

Lord Randolph.—Thy words, the words of truth, have pierc'd
 my heart.
 I am the stain of knighthood and of arms.
 Oh! if my brave deliverer survives
 The traitor's sword——

Anna.—Alas! look there, my lord.

Lord Rand.—The mother and her son! How curst I am!
 Was I the cause? No: I was not the cause.
 Yon matchless villain did seduce my soul
 To frantic jealousy.

Anna.—My lady lives:
 The agony of grief hath but supprest
 Awhile her powers.

Lord Rand.—But my deliverer's dead!
 The world did once esteem Lord Randolph well.
 Sincere of heart, for spotless honor fam'd:
 And, in my early days, glory I gain'd
 Beneath the holy banner of the cross.
 Now past the noon of life, shame comes upon me;

Reproach, and infamy, and public hate,
 Are near at hand: for all mankind will think
 That Randolph basely stabb'd Sir Malcolm's heir.
 (Lady Randolph recovering.)

Lady Rand.—Where am I now? still in this wretched world?
 Grief cannot break a heart so hard as mine.
 My youth was worn in anguish: but youth's strength
 With hope's assistance, bore the brunt of sorrow;
 And train'd me on to be the object now,
 On which Omnipotence displays itself,
 Making a spectacle, a tale of me,
 To awe its vassal, man.

Lord Rand.—O misery!
 Amidst thy raging grief I must proclaim
 My innocence.

Lady Rand.—Thy innocence!

Lord Rand.—My guilt
 Is innocence compar'd with what thou think'st it.

Lady Rand.—Of thee I think not. what have I to do
 With thee or anything? My son! my son!
 My beautiful! my brave! how fond was I
 Of thee, and of thy valor! My proud heart
 O'erflowed this day with transport, when I thought
 Of growing old amidst a race of thine,
 Who might make up to me their father's childhood,
 And bear my brother's and my husband's name:
 Now all my hopes are dead! A little while
 Was I a wife! a mother not so long!
 What am I now? I know. But I shall be
 That only whilst I please; for such a son
 And such a husband drive me to my fate. (Runs out.)

Lord Rand.—Follow her, Anna: I myself would follow,
 But in this rage she must abhor my presence.
 (Exit Anna.)

Enter Old Norval.

Norval.—I hear the voice of woe; heaven guard my child!

Lord Rand.—Already is the idle, gaping crowd,
 The spiteful vulgar come to gaze on Randolph.
 Begone.

Norr.—I fear thee not. I will not go.

Here I'll remain. I'm an accomplice, lord,
With thee in murder. Yes, my sins did help
To crush down to the ground this lovely plant
O noblest youth that ever yet was born!
Sweetest and best, gentlest and bravest spirit,
That ever bless'd the world! Wretch that I am,
Who saw that noble spirit swell and rise
Above the narrow limits that confin'd it!
Yet never was by all thy virtues won
To do thee justice and reveal the secret,
Which, timely known, had rais'd thee far above
The villain's snare! Oh! I am punish'd now!
These are the hairs that should have strew'd the ground,
And not the locks of Douglas.

(Tears his hair and throws himself upon the body
of Douglas.)

Lord Rand.—I know thee now: thy boldness I forgive!
My crest is fallen. For thee I will appoint
A place of rest, if grief will let thee rest.
I will reward, altho' I cannot punish.
Curst, curst Glenalvon, he escap'd too well,
Tho' slain and baffled by the hand he hated.
Foaming with rage and fury to the last,
Cursing his conqueror, the felon died.

Enter Anna.

Anna.—My lord! my lord!

Lord Rand.—Speak: I can hear of horror.

Anna.—Horror, indeed!

Lord Rand.—Matilda?

Anna.—Is no more;

She ran, she flew like lightning up the hill,
Nor halted till the precipice she gain'd,
Beneath whose low'ring top the river falls
Ingulph'd in rifted rocks: thither she came,
As fearless as the eagle lights upon it,
And headlong down.

Lord Rand.--'Twas I! alas! 'twas I
That fill'd her breast with fury; drove her down
The precipice of death! Wretch that I am!

Anna.—O had you seen her last despairing look!
Upon the brink she stood, and cast her eyes
Down on the deep: then lifting up her eyes
And her white hands to heaven, seeming to say,
Why am I forced to this? she plung'd herself
Into the empty air.

Lord Rand.—I will not vent,
In vain complaints, the passion of my soul.
Peace in this world I never can enjoy.
These wounds the gratitude of Randolph gave.
They speak aloud, and with the voice of fate
Denounce my doom. I am resolv'd. I'll go
Straight to the battle, where the man that makes
Me turn aside must threaten worse than death.
Thou, faithful to thy mistress, take this ring,
Full warrant of my power. Let every rite
With cost and pomp upon their funerals wait:
For Randolph hopes he never shall return.

(Exeunt omnes.)

Home's tragedy of *Douglas* aroused such a storm of indignation among the clergy that he resigned his charge as minister of a Scottish kirk, but was afterward appointed lecturer in a Presbyterian chapel in London and later private secretary to Lord Bute, who, as secretary of state, procured for him a pension of £300 a year; so that he lost nothing through the intolerance of the priesthood. Before *Douglas* he had brought out the tragedy of *Agis*, which was rejected by Garrick as quite unsuitable for the stage. After an interval of several years, *Douglas* was followed by the *Siege of Aquileia*, which Garrick put on the stage, himself tak-

ing the part of *Æmilius*. His *Fatal Discovery* had a run of nine nights, and his *Alonzo* met with fair success; but *Alfred*, his last tragedy, was a flat failure, whereupon he abandoned writing for the stage. The works of Home were collected and published by Henry Mackenzie in 1822, and at that time had still a certain degree of popularity; but apart from his *Douglas*, he is now comparatively unknown, though his writings, both in prose and verse, are far superior to those of his contemporaries.

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